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Prologue

Euphoria stifled a yawn, tapping her tail impatiently on the damp rainforest floor. Her egg was hatching soon, and it's father wasn't there to watch it.

Coyote had promised to come to the rainforest at night, and she had promised to bring their egg. Her tribe, the Rainwings, didn't notice that her egg had a sandy color instead of the normal gradient shades of a Rainwing egg. Which was better.

But *when* was Coyote coming? It was almost midnight, and her egg was trembling, ready to hatch. It was warm, which didn't help with Euphoria's tiredness. She should be asleep by now!

Just as the purple-pink Rainwing was turning around, ready to go back, a dusty yellow dragon crashed through the undergrowth.

"Euphoria!" The Sandwing yelped. She turned around, changing into a delighted bright pink.

"Coyote! What took you so long? The moons are up, and I'm tired!" She scolded. "Our egg is hatching!" Sure enough, the sandy golden egg was rocking back and forth, and a crack had appeared in the hard shell.

"Quick! Set it down on the nest!" Euphoria's mate cried. She quickly set it down on a bed of soft ferns. Suddenly, the egg tilted and landed on its side. The crack became bigger, until finally, it cracked open in half.

A small dragonet with beautiful turquoise and navy scales tumbled out of the egg. She- yes, she- had startling green eyes, shimmering and glittering. Flecks of silver dotted the dragonet's underwings, like a Nightwing. A deadly tail barb glinted in the moonlight, also a pretty shade of blue and green.

"She's beautiful," Coyote breathed. Euphoria nodded silently in

agreement. After a while, her jaws parted in a yawn, and the Rainwing blinked her eyes sleepily.

"I better go get some sleep. Bromeliad's gonna kill me if she finds out I'm too tired to go fruit-gathering with her," Euphoria said. Coyote twined his tail with hers.

"Okay," He rumbled. "Take our dragonet with you. Hide her tail-barb!" Euphoria flapped her wings, and set off towards the Rainwing village. She paused for a moment.

"Bye!" She called. Coyote waved a talon.

"What do we name her?" He asked. Euphoria thought for a moment.

"Jasmin. Her name is Jasmin."

Chapter 1

Jasmin slinked through the crowd of Sandwings. The Scorpion Den was loud, but she could cope with it for a little food, right? The Rainwings didn't let her hunt slothes, though she wouldn't anyways; She had her own pet sloth, and they were too hairy anyways. Toucans were too chewy, and the screaming monkeys were stringy. Buffalo jerky was better, and lizards were good enough for Jasmine.

"Where in all of Pyrrhia is Six-claws?" She muttered to herself. The Sandwing was nowhere to be found, however much she searched the Scorpion Den. She shot into the air and headed towards Queen Thorn's stronghold. She glided down and landed in front of the entrance. A guard stopped her.

"Halt!" He paused in front of her. Jasmine immediately recognized the dragon.

"Hello, are you Meerkat?" She asked politely in a friendly tone. Meerkat stared at her, surprised.

"Yes...?" He answered.

"Take me to Six-claws right now, this instance, or I will pluck off your scales one by one and give you a slow, painful death." Jasmin hissed. Meerkat jumped, and backed away.

"S-sure...?" He looked at her expectantly.

"No need for my name. I know you'll report me." She snapped. Meerkat quickly stumbled inside the stronghold. Soon, they stopped at a room.

"Six-claws is in here," He gestured at the door. Jasmin nodded curtly and brushed past him, yellow scales brushing against warm gold ones. Her tail-barb flicked dangerously close to his neck as she opened the wooden door. Meerkat flinched, and hurried back to the front of the palace.

"Six-claws?" Jasmin called. The Sandwing blinked at her from a pile of sand he was curled up on.

"Yes?" Six-claws saw who it was and immediately gave a name. "Tumbleweed." Jasmin claws at the ground, her tail swinging. She held out a talon, and he dropped two roasted lizards in her palm. Jasmin nodded a farewell and walked out of the stronghold. The assassin was getting to work.

Chapter 2

Jasmin flew out of the tunnel that led to the rainforest. She glided towards the Rainwing village, chewing on a piece of desert rat. There were only 5 dragons to kill today, and she had only gotten enough prey to last two days. Two pieces of buffalo jerky, two lizards, and five cubes of desert rat didn't last as long as it sounded.

Jasmin would have to go back to the Scorpion Den tomorrow so that she didn't starve the day after.

She was *not* looking forward to that. The Den was way too stuffy and loud and full of dragons. Jasmin admitted to herself that she had claustrophobia.

"Scorpion Den again?" Queen Glory appeared out of nowhere in front of her. The Rainwing-Sandwing hastily changed from her Sandwing form into her Rainwing, original one. Jasmin's deep navy and turquoise scales flashed in, replacing the dusty gold. Black eyes turned green, and she made sure her tail-barb was invisible. Queen Glory sighed.

"No use hiding your secret," She looked at Jasmin knowingly. "I've known for a long time."

Jasmin sighed.

"Do you also know what I do there?" She asked. Queen Glory nodded.

"But I won't say, since I hear a Rainwing coming." She grinned. "Right...NOW!"

Sure enough, a bright pink and yellow dragonet burst out of the undergrowth. *Kinkajou,* Jasmin's long-memory brain whispered.

"Hi, Jasmin!" The Rainwing smiled. "Oh, hi, Glory!" Queen Glory shot the over-excited dragonet a look, but waved anyways.

Queen Glory was awesome.

"Hey, Jasmin! You know GLORY here just INVITED me to JADE MOUNTAIN AND I'M SO EXCITED!" Kinkajou squealed.

Kinkajou was just a loud bundle of loud.

"Um, sure," She muttered instead. Jasmin didn't really care about the academy that much, sine it sounded like Kinkajou: Loud.

Also it was under a mountain, and those narrow halls would make her claustrophobia kick in. And dragons did *not* want to see what a panicking Jasmin looked like. They would probably be either injured, scared, or dead.

Queen Glory sighed.

"I was going to tell you, but *Kinkajou* here interrupted me," She said slowly. "Kinkajou, please leave."

The bubbly Rainwing dragonet nodded cheerfully and flew to the village. Jasmin realized what was going to come.

"I invited you to go to Jade Mountain Academy, and Queen Thorn also does. You will leave tomorrow."

Chapter 3

"Are you sure? Maybe you should stay in the rainforest. What if someone finds out you are half Sandwing?" Euphoria fretted. Jasmin rolled her eyes. They were in front of the towering mountain, and Jasmin and Euphoria arrived early, before other dragons could see her.

"I'll be fine," She muttered, ducking when her mother reached to brush her wingtip with hers. Jasmin didn't feel that comfortable with dragons touching her. "I survived for five years, didn't I?"

"*Ye-es*, dear, but-"

"So I'll be fine."

Euphoria sighed, giving in. Jasmin saw dragons starting to fly towards them, and she quickly pushed her mother away.

"You should go," She hissed frantically. "Dragons might see you!" Euphoria rested a talon on her daughter's shoulder before nodding and flying off. Jasmin let out a breath of relief. Euphoria had told her to go in as a proud Rainwing, camouflaging her tail-barb, but Jasmin had another idea in mind.

The turquoise hybrid shifted into a dusty gold, and her eyes changed into black. She made her tail-barb visible. Jasmin was in her Sandwing assassin form.

"Hi! I'm Fatespeaker!" A Nightwing at the entrance of the academy greeted. She was a dark purple with silver scales scattered around her body as well as her wings. "And you are..." She trailed.

"I only got that we have an extra student who got in because two queens asked," Fatespeaker looked at Jasmin expectantly. She gulped. Jasmin never told anyone her Sandwing name before,

because she didn't have one.

"I'm..." *Oasis? Coyote? Lizard? Desert Rat? Mirage?*

Jasmin straightened up. She wasn't Jasmin in her Sandwing form.

She was-

"Mirage. My name is Mirage."

Chapter 4

Mirage. Jasmin- no, Mirage- liked her new name. She had already gotten her welcome scroll, a winglet- Jade Winglet- and a cave to go to. The Rainwing-Sandwing walked through the stone halls to get to her cave. Mirage had expected the hallways to be dark and narrow, but they were filled with light and warmth, far more comfortable than she had expected.

"Where is this sleeping ca- Oh, here it is," Mirage muttered to herself. She entered the cave. It was bigger than she expected, with a scroll rack in the corner. She passed the rack and saw four nests of different kinds. One was a soft moss nest, another was a hammock, the next was a rock ledge, and the last was a circle of soft, warm gold sand.

Mirage headed to the sand nest, and curled up in the warmth. It was comfortable, better than than the vine hammocks that just made her cold. That was why she sneaked out at night, curling up under the sand and sleeping in the other kingdom.

"Hi, clawmates!" A familiar voice burst Mirage's sleep. "I'm Kinkajou! What are your names?" Mirage groaned inwardly. *Kinkajou* was her clawmate? She and the others would never get any rest with her bouncing around annoying them like a fly.

"I'm Moonwatcher, but just Moon is fine," A soft voice interrupted her thoughts. Mirage pushed away her past memories and turned her head to find a Nightwing near the scroll rack.

A
Nightwing
was her
clawmate.

Mirage remembered the time they kidnapped the Rainwings, testing and experimenting on them, torturing them. Coyote had told her all

about the tunnel that led to the secret Nightwing kingdom; the volcano.

Kinkajou seemed to remember this, since she was one of the Rainwings that were captured, because her ruff became slightly orange. Moon flinched as though something invisible hit her across the face.

Mirage was not going to share a cave with a nasty, bragging Nightwing. Not after what they did to Coyote. She could still remember that day, clear as glass. She pushed away the memory.

It hurted way too much.

Chapter 5

Kinkajou peered at Moon.

"You look way healthier than the other Nightwings," She observed. "You don't have that raspy voice, and it looks like you had enough to eat."

Moon nodded nervously. "My mother hid my egg in the rainforest, and I learned how to find fruit." She explained. Mirage nodded slowly. The Nightwing was okay; she wasn't like the others; No superior-than-the-others tone, or the haughty lift of their heads.

Moon had black and green scales, with hints of blue. Her eyes were a dark green Mirage hadn't seen on Nightwings. Two big silver scales that looked like teardrops were next to her eyes, as if they were tears half falling. She looked nervous and looked like she was listening intently at something.

Moon didn't look threatening, but Mirage could see strong muscles rippling the small Nightwing's body. Her talons were sharp and strong-looking, and she was probably an excellent hunter.

She would be quite an opponent if she was Mirage's target. But she could just shut the Nightwing's mouth to stop fire, and choke her to death. That was how Mirage hunted her targets; quick and clean, no evidence that she killed them. She could just stuff a piece of fruit down the dead body's throat and say they died by choking on it.

Mirage killed dragons, dragons who hired her gave her a fair price. Once, a Sandwing in the Scorpion Den only gave her a scrawny lizard after she killed a general in Burn's army.

That Sandwing did not get a happy end.

But Moon might be okay, since she didn't seem like one who Mirage's payer would pay to get her killed. They could be friends.

Kinkajou was looking at the hybrid expectantly.

"I'm Mirage." She said reluctantly. Kinkajou clapped her talons together in delight, and Moon gave her a weak smile.

And suddenly, the Nightwing dragonet crumpled to the ground, clutching her head in pain.

Chapter 6

Kinkajou rushed over to Moon.

"What's wrong, new friend?" She cried. "Did someone hit you with a poison dart?" Two loud, angry voices erupted from outside their cave.

"-You stinking little-"

"Why, you useless-"

It was loud, loud, loud. Maybe not as loud as the Scorpion Den, but still loud for two fighting dragons, one a Skywing, the other a Seawing. Mirage sighed. She knew the Skywing, Carnelian, but the Seawing was new.

"Hey, guys! Calm down!" A Mudwing seperated Carnelian and the Seawing. That was Clay. "Easy there. No need to fight. Carnelian, go calm down in your cave. Pike, walk with me."

Carnelian stomped towards Mirage, Kinkajou, and Moon's cave and slumped down onto the stone ledge.

Oh, our last clawmate. A loud, fighting Skywing who once hired me when she was only a dragonet. Mirage thought skeptically. *Just great.*

Kinkajou scrambled over to the Skywing's bed.

"Hi! What's your name?" She asked. Carnelian snorted and turned around.

"Let me guess...Squelch? Squelch is a cute name, isn't it?" The Rainwing guessed. Moon hid a smile.

"Squelch is more of a Mudwing name, right?" She pointed out.

"Oh, you're right," Kinkajou said. "What about...Friendly? Friendly would suit you so well!" She giggled.

"I am a soldier in Queen Ruby's army!" Carnelian roared. "No one *giggles* at me!"

Kinkajou laughed. "We'll call you Friendly until we know your real name," She grinned.

"Her name's Carnelian." Mirage said bluntly. "I know her."

Carnelian let out a surprised grunt and turned her back towards the three dragonets. Mirage yawned. She went into her own sand nest and curled into a tight ball. Kinkajou leaped into the hammock.

"I'll take the hammock, if you don't mind?" She asked Moon.

"I'm fine. I slept on a moss bed in the rainforest." She said. The Nightwing stumbled into her nest and tucked her tail on top of her snout. Mirage soon fell fast asleep.

It was a long day.

Chapter 7

Mirage woke up at dawn. She was used to waking up early, since her business started then. Kinkajou was lying on her back in her hammock, snoring quietly. Carnelian tossed and turned, teeth bared even in her sleep. Moon was curled in her nest, mumbling softly under her breath.

"...Beware...Jade Mountain...Thunder...Lost...Fall..." She whispered. Mirage listened intently to the words. Moon repeated the words again and again until she whimpered softly and fell silent. Mirage looked at the Nightwing. It sounded cryptic.

"Nothing to do except go out like usual," Mirage whispered to herself. She flew out of the mountain, and headed to the Scorpion Den.

"Where did you go this early in the morning?" Kinkajou asked when she came in their cave.

"Scorpion Den. And this isn't 'early'. I woke up at dawn," Mirage informed. She had had enough time to get five victims, and that had earned her a day and a half worth of food.

Moon stared at her until Mirage got uncomfortable with all their attention on her.

"Where's Carnelian?" She changed the subject. Kinkajou pointed at the rock ledge, and Mirage saw that the Skywing was sitting up with a grumpy expression.

"What?" She growled. Mirage shrugged.

"Let's go to the library!" Kinkajou suggested. Moon and Mirage nodded and they walked to the cave.

"I'm starving! We should go to the Prey Center. I want to see how Clay's doing," Kinkajou bounced up and down.

"I'm not hungry, I ate on the way. But sure." Mirage shrugged. Moon followed the over-excited Rainwing without a word. Mirage kept an eye on her the whole way. She didn't trust the Nightwing. Not yet, anyways.

They arrived at the prey center, and the three dragonets were greeted by a mess of running chickens, dragonets chasing the chickens, and a shocked Clay.

"Clay, this is *madness*!" Kinkajou laughed.

"I know," The Mudwing replied ruefully. Mirage sighed. Great. Just great. All she was asking for was a quiet place to eat and rest, and now they were in this chaotic excuse for a prey center.

"I'll just leave and rest in our cave," Mirage started to head out of the big cave, but Kinkajou barreled into her, making Mirage stumble onto the stone floor.

Chapter 8

"Wait! Stay here with us? Please?" Kinkajou pleaded. Mirage hissed, flicking her tail-barb close to the Rainwing's heart without looking.

"Get off me, or get a poisonous stab in the heart and die slowly and painfully," She growled quietly and menacingly. The Sandwing-Rainwing raised her tail, pointing it directly at Kinkajou's heart.

"Yikes! Okay, okay!" She squeaked. The Rainwing's wingtips turned a pale green, and she quickly slithered off Mirage, avoiding the tail-barb, which was a claw-length away from her heart.

"Calm down, um...?" Clay looked at Mirage, expecting an answer. She took a deep breath and stood up.

"Mirage," She said. "Sorry, Kinkajou, but I don't really like being touched or anything. No more physical touching, please."

"Sure," Kinkajou mumbled, quiet for the first time Mirage saw her. Moon nodded, shock written all over her face.

"I'm sorry," Mirage repeated. "It was instinct. You have to have that reflex if you're going to survive the Scorpion Den looking for targets. They might kill you before you kill them."

She remembered all the times she had almost got killed by doing her job. Her last resort was her venom, but she hardly used it. The assassin ambushed her victims, and killed them swiftly and silently. Where no one sees her, either by staying in a huge crowd, or an empty alley.

"Um," Moon blurted. Mirage turned to the normally quiet Nightwing. "By targets, do you mean prey, or dragons?"

Mirage didn't answer. She quickly changed the subject.

"Well, I thought you were hungry?" She asked Kinkajou. The Rainwing nodded, and rushed off to a fruit pile. Moon followed,

shooting a worried glance at Mirage.

"Alright, Mirage, don't poison any of the students, please?" Clay asked. Mirage jumped. She'd forgotten the Mudwing was there. "We have some cactus juice for Sandwing venom, but don't hurt them, alright?"

With that, he ran back to chasing the students and chickens. Mirage sighed. She walked over to Kinkajou and Moon and waited for them patiently. Moon cast her a nervous glance, then took a couple of mangoes from the pile and sliced them neatly.

Suddenly, Moon winced, crushing the mangoes in her strong grip. The orange mush splattered Kinkajou and almost hit Mirage, but she quickly twist-and-rolled out of the way, avoiding the load.

"What was that for?" She asked, half jokingly. Moon didn't reply, and Mirage raised an eyebrow at her. Suddenly, all the students in the cave started chasing something besides the chickens.

"Catch it!"

"It's mine!"

"I'm gonna kill it and bite its head off!"

Mirage turned to see what was causing the chaos. Moon grabbed something on the floor.

It was a scavenger.

Chapter 9

Mirage stared at the tiny creature. What was a scavenger doing in the prey center? She didn't think the Dragonets would give them to eat, so who brought it? Moon was clutching it close to her chest, protecting it.

Suddenly, the crowd parted and an angry-looking Icewing stomped in front of her.

"You have ten seconds to give me Bandit," He growled. "Or you can have your face freeze off."

"No," Moon whispered. Mirage looked at her, surprised. She had expected the Nightwing to give it back.

"Then I'll freeze your horns and snap them off," The Icewing hissed. "Then freeze your tail, snap then off. Freeze your talons, snap them off. Shall I continue?"

"No," Moon repeated, more firmly. "You can't eat the scavenger. No one can."

He looked taken aback for a second, then said, "I also think that. But he's mine. My idiot clawmate set him free, and he ran here."

Suddenly, a friendly looking Sandwing pushed his way towards the two fighting dragons.

"Hi, I'm the idiot clawmate, but most dragons call me Qibli," He introduced. "That's my clawmate Winter. Hey, Winter, chill. Ha, I know right? I'm hilarious. But he's right, you know. That's his pet, and maybe you can get something else to eat?"

Moon blinked.

"I wasn't going to eat him," She whispered.

"Yeah, Igloo-face," Mirage snapped at Winter. "No need to shout at

her." Winter frowned at the hybrid.

"What did you say?" He demanded. Mirage sighed.

"I said," She repeated slowly, as if explaining something to a baby dragonet. "Yeah, Igloo-face, no need to shout at her."

"How dare you? I'm Prince Winter, nephew to Queen Glacier. My sister is the heir to the throne!" He roared. Mirage sighed again.

It was going to be a long fight.

Chapter 10

After a surprisingly short fight, Sunny had come to separate the two dragonets. They made a compromise, blah blah blah. Mirage didn't care about that boring stuff. It was time to meet their winglets, and she wasn't too nervous.

Mirage arrived at the cave with Kinkajou and Moon. She analyzed the dragons who were already there. A Mudwing and a Seawing she didn't know were there, sitting in a circle. Carnelian was scowling at everyone, Kinkajou was beaming as if she had eaten the biggest fruit in the rainforest, and Moon was fiddling with her tail, a worried look scrunching up her face.

A deep blue Seawing was in the front, forcing a smile on her snout. That was Tsunami, head of school. Two dragonets left to come. Icewing and Sandwing. Footsteps grew closer, and Mirage had a horrible idea who they were.

Sunny was leading Winter and Qibli into the cave.

"Hi, we changed the winglets around a bit because of the incident, so meet your new Icewing and Sandwing!" She smiled, and left. Mirage groaned quietly. Tsunami stood up.

"Hi, my name is Tsunami, though you probably know that already," She grinned. "I know a couple of you already."

"Like mee!" Kinkajou yelled. Carnelian rolled her eyes. Tsunami offered everyone fish, and they all took some. Except Kinkajou and Mirage.

"I'll get something from the prey center later," She said politely. Mirage snorted. They just went to the prey center.

"I'm not hungry." She stated.

"Let's start by introducing ourselves," The Seawing suggested.

"Carnelian, do you want to go first?"

Carnelian sighed and got up.

"I'm Carnelian and I'm a loyal subject to Queen Ruby," Mirage stopped listening halfway. After a few moments, Carnelian glared at the dragonets, then paused. "My favorite color's red."

"Anything else?" Tsunami asked. The Skywing scowled, then shook her head.

"I'll go next!" Kinkajou volunteered. Tsunami nodded.

"Well, I'm Kinkajou, I'm a Rainwing, and I've never met any other tribes before! Well, except the Dragonets of Destiny, because I'm really good friends with them. I'm really excited to learn how to read and learn about all your tribes and I think this school is the best idea. And *my* favorite color is yellow!"

"Of course it is," Carnelian grumbled. Mirage rolled her eyes, but couldn't help agree. The tiny Rainwing was yellow from horns to tail, except a few splotches of pink.

"Your turn," She nudged Moon.

"I'm Moonwatcher," She mumbled. "But please call me Moon. Um, I grew up in the rainforest. I like scrolls." Mirage thought over her statements. She was also hatched in the rainforest. Maybe this Nightwing could relate to her.

"Me, too." The other Seawing in the back called. "I mean, I also like scrolls. At least ones that my mother didn't write. I've read way too many of those. I'm Turtle, by the way." Qibli went next.

"I'm Qibli," He said. "I was one of Thorn's Outclaws before she became queen. My plan is to learn everything as fast as possible and go back to help her with the Kingdom of Sand."

"I'm sure she's lost without you," Winter said scathingly.

"And I'm sure you're perfectly essential in your kingdom," Qibli shot back. Winter frowned and shut his snout.

"I'm Umber," The Mudwing offered. "I think we've been in a battle together. I mean, you look familiar."

Carnelian relaxed a bit.

Maybe this winglet would be more comfortable than we expect, Mirage thought.

Chapter 11

"Well, *I* am Winter," Winter said haughtily.

"Nephew of Queen Glacier," Qibli said at the same time with a straight face. Winter frowned at him.

"Don't you mock me," He glared at the Sandwing.

"I would never dream of that," He grinned.

"If you're the Head of School, are you the one to talk to about having a private cave?" Winter asked Tsunami.

"Why, yes," She replied. "The answer's no."

"See? I'm your destiny," Qibli shrugged innocently. Moon smothered a giggle, and he smiled at her.

"Well, it's your turn." Tsunami nodded at Mirage.

"Oh, right." She sighed. "I'm Mirage, and I work a society by myself in the Scorpion Den."

"What society?" Kinkajou asked. The hybrid groaned inwardly. She knew she had to answer sooner than later.

"Fine," She scowled. "I'm an assassin."

Tsunami's face was priceless.

"I only kill if I'm paid," Mirage shrugged. "No need to worry. I know you." She told a startled Carnelian. "You told me to murder Queen Scarlet's son, Hawk. And I did. Guess what? Queen Scarlet told me to kill you. You're lucky it was a resting day for me and I don't really like Scarlet a lot."

Carnelian blinked, then huffed out a breath, half relieved, half unsettled.

"Oh, no wonder you're familiar." Qibli told Mirage. "I saw my brother hire you once. He said you did a real good job."

"No you didn't," She snapped. "Sirocco did hire me, but I never tell my payers if I succeed or not. Though I do. They have no need to worry."

"But I might be familiar," She said after a pause. "I target my victims in the Scorpion Den. The other day I went to Queen Thorn's palace to find Six-claws. He told me my target, I got them."

Everyone inched away from her slightly, even Tsunami. Mirage sighed.

"I would probably say no to whoever told me to murder a student, probably by killing them," She observed. "But I just might say yes if you keep doing that. Stop that," She snapped as Winter breathed in a breath of frostbreath.

Mirage rolled her eyes, settling her wings back, trying not to turn red, not turning red, definitely not turning red.

She should tell them.

No, she shouldn't.

She would.

She would tell Tsunami that Scarlet was hiring her to kill everyone in Jade Mountain.

Chapter 12

"Ookaay..." Qibli wrinkled his snout in a thoughtful way. "So, what exactly do we need to worry about? You killing us, or Queen Scarlet still being alive?"

"Probably Queen Scarlet," Kinkajou piped up. "Mirage wouldn't kill us all."

"Course I won't," She snorted. Her tail twitched, instinctively pointing at Kinkajou, who was way too close to her than comfortable. It was after the small group discussion, and the winglet was hunting. Mirage had told them about Queen Scarlet's plan, and they were discussing while hunting.

"Can I go to the Scorpion Den to earn some food?" Mirage flew over to Tsunami.

"No, certainly not," She answered breezily. "You stay in the mountain and stay there."

"But I already left at dawn," She pointed out.

"You *what*?"

"I went to the Scorpion Den to get breakfast at dawn."

Tsunami sighed.

"Look," She patted Mirage's head. The Sandwing-Rainwing ducked, tail-barb barely stopping itself from plunging into the blue Seawing's heart. It twitched instead, close to her side. Tsunami flinched slightly.

"I know you do this regularly, but this is a school for peace, and assassinating is the complete opposite of that," She explained. Mirage spotted a mountain goat near them, and nodded. She dived, tail-barb pointed down, and aimed at the animal's side.

Only it wasn't the goat.

Moon had lunged at the exact same heartbeat, and she was in Mirage's aim.

"Moon, get out of the way!" She shrieked a second too late. Her venomous tail plunged straight at her friend's heart.

Chapter 13

Mirage curled her tail, making sure the venomous tip doesn't scratch her own tail, and the harmless loop collided into Moon's chest.

"Moon, it's fine, you're safe," Mirage soothed. The Nightwing's eyes were shut tight, wings tense.

"I'm...not dead?" She whispered.

"Well, course not! Why else would you be talking?" Mirage snorted. Qibli flew over to the two.

"Moon!" He cried. "Are you alright?"

Mirage rolled her eyes, her ruff, which was folded back so others could barely see it, threatening to turn red. A blur of green and lime passed her as Kinkajou raced to her friend. Mirage turned and saw that the goat had went into hiding behind a huge rock. She glided over and grabbed it, killing it with a squeeze. She flew over to her friends, and tossed the dead goat at Moon's feet.

"Here, it's yours," She called from the sky. "I owe it to you."

Mirage wasn't doing this because she felt bad, but because she didn't like to owe someone her whole life. That was happened her first day of being an assassin.

Flashback:

Jasmin was 3. She fluttered through the trees and landed in front of the tunnel that led to the Kingdom of Sand. She waited for Coyote to come out, and they could talk about what they did during the day. But Coyote didn't come. He was nowhere to be seen, even though she waited and waited until the moons were out.

Nowhere.

Suddenly, a flash of black caught her eye. A Nightwing landed in front of her, flying out of the tunnel, holding two sharp discs in each talon. Jasmin crouched defensively, mouth snapped open, showing sharp fangs that shot deadly venom. Her tail-barb became visible, and she pointed it at his direction. Her scales turned a fiery scarlet, with hints of lime on her ruff.

"Oh, what a surprise! A Rainwing who's actually ready to fight! Though you might not be totally a Rainwing," The Nightwing smirked. He looked young, about ten. He looked healthy, not like the ones Coyote described.

"Who are you and why are in our rainforest?" Jasmin demanded. She might be small, but she was fierce.

"Why should I tell you?" He grinned. "But I'll tell you anyways. I'm Deathbringer. Who are you?"

Jasmin growled, trembling with fear, and lime green spread around her scales. She stamped it out and replaced it with a bright red with orange streaks.

"What are you doing here?" She hissed, ignoring his question.

"Well, I'll tell you if you tell me your name," Deathbringer offered. Jasmin growled in frustration, the orange crowding the red.

"I'm Jasmin," She said after a moment of hesitation. The Nightwing chuckled.

"Well, I came here because I'm an assassin, and I have to kidnap some of your tribe. Are you a hybrid?" He asked. Jasmin nodded slowly.

"Though you might already know," Jasmin added fiercely. "I'm a Sandwing-Rainwing hybrid. What do you do as an assassin?"

So Deathbringer told her all about it, about killing dragons they've been assigned, and sneaking around. Jasmin had listened to every single detail with careful attention, and when he finally finished, she spoke up.

"I want to be an assassin."

Chapter 14

"It's not that easy," Deathbringer protested. "You're a Rainwing, what's more, a Rainwing dragonet."

"So you're saying no just because I'm a Rainwing and I'm young?" Jasmin growled.

"Yes. Well, no. But yes." He stammered. "I mean, I was about your age when I became an assassin, but that's not the point-"

"So you're saying no because I'm a hybrid?"

"No!"

"So it's because I'm a Rainwing."

"Yes," Deathbringer said.

"It would help me, right? I can camouflage and shoot venom," Jasmin insisted."And also, a venomous tail-barb here!"

Deathbringer gave in.

"Okay, I'll teach you. Instead, you have to never, ever say anything about it, and say why I was here. Never in your entire life?"

"But what if it's an emergency?"

"Only if I give you permission."

"Fine."

And that was how she learned from her Nightwing mentor every night, mastering skills and stealth, going out on her own assassinating mission.

Coyote had disappeared, and Deathbringer had told her truthfully that one of the Nightwing assassins had killed him.

"Why?" Jasmin asked. "Coyote did nothing wrong!"

"He came too close to our Nightwing kingdom. He came in the tunnel, Jasmin." Deathbringer said.

"But they killed him. I'll tell everyone about your Nightwing tunnel! I hate Nightwings, I hate you!" Jasmin cried.

"You sweared not to tell, Jasmin. Listen, calm down!" He shouted.

"I don't care!"

"Then I'll tell about your secret."

Silence.

"Fine, I won't tell, but I will never come here again. I mastered enough skills." She hissed. Dethbringer's face fell.

"Jasmin, please-"

"Never."

And she flew off, leaving Deathbringer watching her sadly. She promised to never, ever owe anyone *anything.*

Not after her father's death.

Chapter 15

"Mirage? Mirage?" A familiar voice shook Jasmin out of her memories. Wait, she was Mirage. Mirage the second Sandwing of Jade Winglet.

Not Jasmin. Jasmin was a foolish Rainwing who trusted even the most sinister *Nightwing* in anything.

But she *was* still Jasmin, just in a different form.

And now Deathbringer, that cheeky Nightwing, was Queen Glory's personal bodyguard. He did not deserve that, not in all of Pyrrhia.

"Mirage?"

Mirage shook her head, clearing her thoughts. Qibli was watching her carefully, and his eyes betrayed suspicion.

"I'm fine. Just thinking." She sighed. To be honest, those nights outside the Rainwing village were one of her only good memories. Those nights were busy, busy, busy, just like how Mirage liked it to be. Moon was looking at her strangely, and her face was furrowed as if she was listening to invisible things.

Like she was reading her mind.

"What?" Mirage snapped at the Nightwing. Moon looked down, and if she had Rainwing scales, Mirage was pretty sure she would be purple for guilt.

"Let's go back," Kinkajou suggested. She had a berry stain on her snout, and Mirage guessed that the Rainwing had found a berry bush nearby while she was catching the goat.

"Sure," Turtle said, flying over to them. The group flew back to the prey center, and Mirage caught a lizard on the way.

After finishing their meal, chatting with Clay, talking about

clawmates, and sharing the goat with Sora and Marsh, Mirage was able to push her memory to the back of her mind. Moon had a strange, faraway look in her eyes, and Mirage stared at her curiously.

"Um, Sora, do you want to go to the library with me?" Moon blurted. Sora looked at her, surprised, then nodded.

"I'd like that," She whispered shyly.

The two dragonets headed towards the library, and the remaining ones turned back to their food.

"I'm full," Mirage said. "I'll go to the history cave early."

"No! Please stay and talk with us," Kinkajou said, reaching out with a talon to grab her tail. Mirage twitched her tail-barb warningly, and the Rainwing gulped and quickly withdrew her talon.

"Mirage! You might want to stop that habit, or you will probably have to face the fiery wrath of Tsunami's anger for poisoning your own clawmate," Clay warned.

"I don't want to stop this habit," Mirage muttered. "It's useful in the Scorpion Den. Right, Qibli?"

The Sandwing looked startled for a moment, then nodded his head.

"You have to watch your back; It's either you die or survive," He said. "I have experience with my siblings."

"Sirocco and Rattlesnake did seem very grumpy," Mirage agreed. "Your mother is Cobra, right?"

Qibli nodded as a shadow crossed his face.

"She's violent," She observed. "Very smashy."

Qibli had an expression that said he couldn't agree more.

Chapter 16

"It's almost time for history now, maybe we should go now?" Mirage asked. "Okay, I'm going."

Just as she was leaving, a Skywing walked into the academy. But she wasn't an ordinary Skywing like Carnelian.

This Skywing had bright orange scales, brighter than any other Skywing Mirage had ever seen, with blazing electric-blue eyes. Smoke rose from her scales, and she was holding herself carefully, as if afraid she would break something.

Oh, Mirage thought faintly. *It's Peril.*

She had seen the dragon in the Skywing arena while trying to find her targets in the Skywing kingdom. Peril was dangerous. Unstoppable.

Invincible.

Many Icewings had tried to get Mirage to take her down, but Mirage always refused. Peril was the only dragon Mirage could never kill.

But perhaps there was a way.

Kinkajou came back with Moon at her tail.

"She's all smoky and kind of burnt smelling," Kinkajou whisper-shouted.

"She's called Peril," Mirage and Winter said at the same time. Well, Winter was snarling.

"How do you know her?" He asked.

"My missions in the Skywing kingdom," She shrugged. "You know, assassins travel."

The others looked a bit shaken. Mirage flicked her tail irritably, and they jumped out of the way. She sighed.

"That monster killed hundreds of Icewing prisoners," Winter growled. "She's dangerous."

"I've killed Icewings before," Mirage offered. "And I am pretty dangerous. Being dangerous doesn't always mean a bad thing."

"That is *not* comforting," Qibli observed. "The complete opposite, actually."

"Really? Wow, guess what? I didn't mean for it to be," Mirage said sarcastically. Qibli rolled his eyes.

"You know, you really remind me of Glory," Moon raised an eyebrow at her. "Sassy and sarcastic."

Just then, Clay limped through the crowd.

"Peril! You're here!" He cried. Tsunami was behind him, groaning loudly.

"I couldn't find her," Peril muttered miserably.

"Don't worry, you can stay here! We want you to stay," Clay grinned. Mirage found out that almost all of the dragonets in the crowd were angry and scared she was here. Moon was looking terrified. Mirage didn't really care whether Peril stayed or not, so long she didn't annoy her.

Mirage saw from the corner of her eye that Moon was inching closer to her. What did the Nightwing want?

What was she up to?

Chapter 17

Mirage narrowed her eyes at the Nightwing. She flinched, and hurried back to Kinkajou's side. Moon avoided the Sandwing-Rainwing's hard gaze. Peril was following Clay, and students were casting her angry glares and muttering furiously to neighbor dragons.

"She's dangerous!"

"We're all going to die!"

"She'll kill us all in our sleep!"

Winter was narrowing his eyes at the Skywing, and she glanced around and fluffed out her wings. Everyone took an automatic step back.

"I don't see anyone do that whenever they see me," Mirage commented drily. "And Peril's did about the same things as I did. It's not fair for her; Those stupid dragons should be angry at Scarlet for making her kill those dragons. And yes- I also mean you. So shut your stupid royal snout, Igloo-face."

Winter's mouth snapped closed. Turtle was looking thoughtfully at Mirage.

"You're right," He nodded. "She was only following orders, and every dragon does that with their queen."

The Icewing's spikes rattled as he rose to look menacingly at Mirage. He was way taller than her, who was pretty small for a 5 year old dragonet.

"But she is way dangerous, and you are not; You're only five years old," He growled, tongue flicking in and out in a dangerous way. She just shrugged. She didn't want to do this, but Winter was practically inviting her to.

"Wait- Stop fighting you guys!" Qibli shouted. "You'll only get into trou-"

Mirage launched herself onto Winter's back in a blink of an eye. She wrapped her talons around his neck, and poised her tail-barb a scale away from his chest.

"What did you say about me not being dangerous?" She said coldly. "Sorry, I didn't hear it properly. Speak up, Icewing."

Winter growled, flinching as she added pressure in her claws. A crowd had gathered around them, and Clay hurried back from taking Peril to her separate cave.

"What's going on guys?" He asked cheerfully. "Wait-"

"What is the meaning of this?" A voice boomed. "Mirage, Winter?"

It was Tsunami. The Seawing's wings were flared open furiously, and if she could breathe fire, she would have smoke wreathing around her whole body.

Oh dear.

Mirage sure was in quite a lot of trouble.

Chapter 18

"So?" Tsunami demanded. "What in all of Pyrrhia happened to you guys? First you have a fight about one measly scavenger-" Winter opened his snout to argue that Bandit wasn't a 'measly scavenger', but the Seawing glared at him, and he shut his mouth. "-And now you're almost killing each other and talking back to the Headmistress of this school! Mirage, why were you attacking Winter?"

"He provoked me," She admitted. "My instincts were just kicking in. Sorry."

"Talons and teeth, why would your 'Instincts' include almost killing a fellow student in this moon-cursed PEACEFUL school?" Tsunami demanded.

"Um," Mirage said. "Scorpion Den? Hello, me, an assassin in this school shouldn't have instincts, so, lalala, I'll just fix all my habits of being cautious in TWO days, and just give up my work in the Scorpion Den and I'll just starve to death when school actually ends. Awesome. Just great."

Tsunami sighed, rubbing her temples with her talons.

"Sunny, I asked for a whole bunch of dragonets who are RESPONSIBLE, CAN LISTEN TO ORDERS, and what do I get? Two rambunctious dragonets who fight every second!" She grumbled.

"I am giving you ONE last chance before I lose my temper and make you clean all sleeping caves." She said after a moment.

"Didn't you already lose your temper?" Winter demanded.

"THAT'S IT! GO CLEAN THOSE CAVES RIGHT THIS INSTANT!" Tsunami roared.

Mirage sighed.

"This was all your fault," She muttered furiously at Winter.

He didn't reply except a low growl, and just stomped towards his cave. Mirage rolled her eyes, then walked to her own cave. They had finished their punishment, and missed the rest of school. Her stomach was growling, as the two didn't get to have a lunch break.

"Hi, Mirage!" Kinkajou whispered from her hammock. Moon was asleep, curled in a bundle of black scales, breathing in and out softly. Carnelian grunted in her sleep, turning around with a growl. "Why weren't you in history or any other classes?"

"Don't talk to me right now, I'm feeling especially grumpy right now because of a certain troublemaking Icewing," Mirage hissed. Kinkajou fell silent, and the hybrid went over to her own bed and rummaged around her stash of food. She ate a couple of lizards, and turned around in the warm sand.

"You're not going to murder me in my sleep, right?" Kinkajou asked sleepily. Mirage stifled a snort of amusement.

"No, unless you're my target. Which it isn't." She closed her eyes.

"Okay. Goodnight."

Chapter 19

It had been a couple of days since Mirage had came to the academy. She had managed to hide her other half tribe, and no one suspected her. Except Moon.

Mirage had a feeling the Nightwing somehow knew about her secret.

They were currently heading to history. Mirage was scanning her surroundings, Kinkajou was chattering with an absentminded Moon, and Qibli and Winter were staring at Moon with weird eyes while arguing softly under their breaths.

Suddenly, Moon went still, almost making Mirage slam into her.

"Watch it!" She growled. But Moon wasn't listening. Or couldn't. The Nightwing was staring into empty space, fear and terror filling her green eyes. She collapsed, and Winter reached out a talon to stop her from falling to the stone ground.

"You alright?" He asked casually, though worry sparked his gaze.

"Winter," Moon breathed, then let out a deep breath.

"Well, I'll just go in-" Mirage began.

"No! Don't go in!" Moon cried, desperation showing in her eyes. "No one goes in!"

"Um, okay..." Qibli blinked. His tail was lashing in an agitated arc, as if he felt helpless in this situation. Carnelian stomped in front of them and headed into the cave.

"Wait, Carnelian!" Qibli called. The Skywing turned around with a scowl.

"What?" She hissed.

"Uh, don't go there," Turtle fidgeted his claws nervously.

"Why not?" She demanded.

"Because, um, I smelled smoke. Some pieces of paper might have caught on fire," Qibli interjected.

"Smells fine to me," Carnelian sniffed the air suspiciously, then went in. Moon raised a talon to stop her, but the Skywing was already in.

"Well, we'll have to skip history then," Kinkajou decided. "But Tamarin can get us some notes."

"She's in there?" Moon asked, panicking.

"Yeah, she can meet us in the librar-"

An explosion of flames cut her off.

Chapter 20

Mirage flung herself in front of Moon, Kinkajou, Qibli, Turtle, and Winter to protect them from the blast. Small sharp objects imbedded themselves between her scales, and fire licked at her body. Mirage cried out in pain as she collapsed onto the floor. Moon yelped as one of the round spiky objects whizzed past her crumpled body and hit her shoulder.

"Moon! Are you alright?" Qibli hurried to the injured Nightwing. Mirage stamped out the white trying to sneak onto her scales and struggled to stand up.

"Carnelian..." She whispered, then limped towards the cave. A crowd gathered around the cave, and Clay rushed past her into the burning cave. Flames engulfed him, but the Mudwing's scales mended over the burns. Mirage winced with every step, and dived into the burning cave, holding her breath.

"Mirage! Come back!" Kinkajou's voice was faint as flames swallowed the hybrid. She ignored the pain and squinted through the burning reds and orange.

"...Tamarin...Carnelian!" Mirage called through the smoke. Her foot bumped a scroll rack, and she flung it aside to find the blind Rainwing's white scales. She picked her up and limped towards the doorway.

"Mirage!" She heard.

"Here," She rasped as she stumbled outside and put down Tamarin's unconscious body. A bundle of lime green barreled into Mirage, and she groaned at the piercing pain. She tried to block out the white marching onto her scales, but it barraged past her feeble attempt. For once, the Rainwing-Sandwing was glad that Kinkajou was covering her scales so that no one could see her scales.

"You're alright!" The Rainwing cried. She jumped back onto the

stone floor and examined Tamarin.

"Oh, no," Kinkajou whispered. Mirage stumbled back onto her feet and staggered towards the cave again.

"I have to...find survivors," She mumbled.

"Nope, you are definitely staying here!" Turtle blocked her way. "You're in no condition to go back into that moon-cursed cave!"

"Yeah, Mirage," Qibli agreed. "It won't help anyone if another dragon died."

"Another?" She repeated. Moon shuffled away sadly to reveal the burnt body of a Nightwing. Peril burst out of the history cave holding a blackened Carnelian.

"Carnelian!" Kinkajou yelled. Winter and a couple of other Icewings shot some blasts of frostbreath at the fire, making the flames die down.

"Anyone who was injured, go straight to the infirmary," Tsunami ordered. Mirage darted behind some rocks, hiding from the Seawing. She didn't need to get treated. She just needed a couple of days of rest.

"Where are you- Oh, for moon's sake!" Winter hissed. He grabbed Qibli by the elbow and tugged him to her hiding place. Moon and Kinkajou followed, with Turtle stumbling after them with a worried expression.

"I don't need treatment," Mirage said. Kinkajou opened her mouth to protest, but Winter gave her a cold glare.

"What I want to know," He growled. "Is how *she* knew about this."

With that, he pointed a claw at Moon.

Chapter 21

Mirage swayed on her talons, her mind not taking in all of that. She was a bit dizzy from the lack of blood. The smoke made her mind hazy, and the burns the flames made were stinging. The spiky balls were stuck firmly between her scales.

"How exactly did you know?" Winter's voice was faint, and her ears didn't take it in clearly. Moon was trembling in fear, but she also kept giving Mirage worried glances.

"I-" Moon was cut off by Winter's menacing hiss.

"I'm giving you six days to tell me," He growled.

"Wait, guys-" Qibli interrupted.

"I don't care what you have to say to protect this Nightwing," Winter scorned. "Sand-snorter."

"I wasn't going to say anything about Moon," The Sandwing didn't seem to hear the insult. "We need to get Mirage to the hospital wing."

Everyone turned to her. Kinkajou's mouth was moving, but why couldn't she hear anything? Black crowded her eyes, and she fell to the ground. Scales brushed against Mirage's burnt scales, and she fell into a pained sleep.

"Quick! Someone! Anyone! Please help us!" Moon cried. "Mirage is injured and we need to get her to the healers!"

But everyone had left. Kinkajou shook Mirage's unconscious body frantically, but she didn't move. Qibli turned to the others.

"One of us- Kinkajou- Go get Clay or Tsunami or any of the Dragonets. We need to be quick, or Mirage might not survive." He ordered.

"Let's g o, go go!" Kinkajou shouted, pushing Moon in front of her. The two ran through the halls, and literally ran into Clay.

"Ow! No running in the hall, Kinkajou. And Moon," He said. Kinkajou ignored him

"Help! Mirage is hurt and she's knocked out and we need to get her to the healers!" She cried. Clay froze, then flung his wing out and ran to the rocks with Kinkajou and Moon in the lead. They heaved the small Sandwing onto the Mudwing's sturdy back and raced to the hospital wing.

"We need to get there quickly," Clay's usual bright eyes were shadowed with worry.

"Or she might not make it."

Chapter 22

*"Hey, Clay! You know the rules. No running in the halls!" Tsunami roared, blocking their way. "*And *you're letting the students run* with *you! Not the best role model."*

"Tsunami, Mirage was injured and we need to get to the healers real quick!" Clay explained. Mirage opened her eyes with a groan, then closed them again, breathing slower and shallower. Tsunami turned pale, then moved out of the way.

"GO FASTER!" She roared. "I will not *have another dead student in this school!"*

Qibli put a comforting wing around Moon, and she thanked him with a blink. Kinkajou ran at top speed to the hospital wing with Clay on her tail.

Finally, the winglet arrived at the cave. They set her down on a bed and the healers shooed them away. They treated the half-dead Sandwing and finally, when it was dark, they announced that she would live.

"Thank the moons," Moon breathed. Winter let out a breath he was holding, and Kinkajou and Turtle sighed with relief. Qibli nodded in agreement.

Mirage was going to be fine.

Mirage blinked open her eyes and they met Moon's dark green ones. The silver scales under the Nightwing's shone in the sunlight.

"How long was I out for?" Mirage asked.

"Um, five days," Moon replied.

"WHAT?" The hybrid made to jump out of the bed, then immediately stopped, wincing at the pain. Then she looked down

and saw that, from the gaps that weren't covered in bandages or ointment, her scales were a shade of turquoise, navy, and purple. Flecks of silver shone here and there.

"Oop," She looked up at Moon.

"I already knew," She said softly. "I couldn't tell you my secret since you were knocked out, and the others didn't take it in very well."

"I have a lot to tell you. Secrets. My secrets."

Chapter 23

Mirage listened to Moon's confession with rapt attention.

"So you knew my secret since I came to this school?" She asked. Moon shook her head.

"You hid it from yourself pretty well until that memory," She admitted. "I tried to block it, but I couldn't. But know I can, thanks to-"

Moon cut off awkwardly. Mirage narrowed her eyes.

"Thanks to who?" She asked. Her scales shifted to her Sandwing form as she did so.

"Never mind. No one important," The Nightwing said quickly. "You knew Deathbringer?"

"Yes." Mirage suspected that she was changing the subject. "He taught me how to be an assassin."

She remembered the times she had trained, learned, and talked with him. Deathbringer was pretty nice at that time, but now Mirage thought he was just a jerk.

"You shouldn't hate him for something his- our- tribe did, you know," Moon interrupted suddenly. Mirage shrugged angrily. The Nightwing was making it hard for her to figure her out.

"But I do, and I can," Mirage retorted. Moon nodded, not wanting to argue.

"Um, what powers do you have?" She asked the hybrid. Mirage blinked, not wanting to spill her secrets to the Nightwing.

But she'll know anyways, Her mind whispered. Mirage sighed.

"I can do this," She turned her tail barb invisible, then her whole

body. "And this." Mirage changed back into a Sandwing and snapped open her jaws. Venom sprayed out of her fangs, and hit the stone floor with a hiss, eating the ground up.

"You have all the powers from both tribes?" Moon asked, impressed. Mirage blinked.

"I can't survive long in the heat, or not eating or drinking. And I also can't breathe fire. But the other powers, yes."

"So you don't live in the desert?" Moon prodded.

"Yes, I live in the Rainwing village. You've probably never seen me. I spent most of my time in the Scorpion Den hunting down my targets."

Moon winced, then asked, "What's your real name?"

Mirage smiled.

"Jasmin."

Chapter 24

"What do I say to Winter?" Moon asked. "He thinks I killed Carnelian and Bigtail."

Moon had just finished explaining what had happened while Mirage was out cold, and asking for suggestions.

"You could say you did," Mirage replied. Moon made a face, and she gave a short bark of laughter.

"Ha! I was just kidding!" Mirage said quickly. "Three moons, your face was priceless! But you could tell Igloo-face the truth."

"You really need to call Winter something else," Moon commented.

"Like what? His Royal Majesty? No thank you," Mirage rolled her eyes. "I'd rather kill him."

"Do you mean metaphorically, or are you serious right now? You're an assassin, you might be saying the truth right now," The Nightwing blinked.

"Both."

The two dragonets talked and laughed for a bit more, then headed out of their cave. When they were walking out of the hallway, they came face to face with Qibli.

"Don't," He said quickly. "I'm not ready right now."

"For what?" Mirage snorted. "It's not going to kill you to hang out with a mind reader, you know."

"Mirage!" His face lit up. "You're awake!"

"'Course," Mirage ducked as the Sandwing reached out a wing. "Why shouldn't I be?"

"Um. Maybe because you were out for five days?" Qibli informed.

"But maybe it wouldn't harm you to visit a knocked out friend even after you had a quarrel with me," Moon suggested.

"Oh," He blinked at her, startled at her ferociousness. "I tried, but you..."

Because Moon was there, Mirage guessed. Moon looked taken aback for a second, then sighed.

"I can't help the way I am," She murmured. "I was just born that way. I wasn't going to tell anyone because Secretkeeper said everyone would hate me. And she's right. Except for you," Moon added quickly, casting a grateful glance at Mirage.

"Hey, I was going to help you right now," Qibli looked hurt for a second. "Don't you see how important your powers are right now? You can just hear for a dragon to say, 'Tralala, here I come, the almighty one who killed Carnelian and Bigtail and injured Tamarin. Aren't I so smart', and there! You got them."

Mirage nodded slowly. Qibli was right.

Moon could be the key to finding the murderer.

Chapter 25

It did not go as easy as that. Not one of their suspects, (Pike, Icicle, Flame, Onyx), were the ones who set the history cave aflame. Not even Onyx, who Moon's mind reading couldn't work. But Mirage suspected that she had managed to get past the mental shield, and that was why Moon had said that she was certain Onyx didn't do it.

"This isn't as easy as I thought," Mirage commented. Moon agreed with a quick nod. They headed to their sleeping cave to get some sleep. Kinkajou was surprisingly waiting for them.

"Moon!" She shouted, flinging her wings around the Nightwing. "I'm so sorry for not talking to you, but I was kind of freaked out and Tamarin was hurt and you could've prevented it but I forgive you and do you forgive me?"

Moon blinked, surprised, then nodded. "I'm sorry for not telling you sooner, Kinkajou." She whispered.

"And I'll just stand in the middle of this cave acting like everything's alright and trying not to be awkward." Mirage said.

"Mirage!" Kinkajou shrieked. "I was so worried but everything's fine now and I'm SO MAD at you don't get hurt again! THREE MOONS I WAS SO FREAKED OUT WHEN THE HEALERS SAID YOU MIGHT DIE! I'm sorry for not visiting, but I was checking on Tamarin!"

"Don't worry," Mirage said drily. "The one I want to kill right now is Winter, who, by the way, is a huge jerk."

"Okay, that's a relief, but I'm kinda worried for Winter right now," Kinkajou grinned. "Since I saw that you are SO TOTALLY capable of killing him."

"Can we sleep first and do heart-warming apologies tomorrow?" Mirage asked. Without waiting for a reply, she tucked into her nest, glad for the soft sand under her instead of the bed of leaves in the

infirmary.

"Goodnight,"

"Let me sleep."

"Goodnight!"

Chapter 26

Mirage woke up with a sigh. Her whole body was aching from burns and scratches, since the effects of the ointment was fading off. She didn't think that the smell of smoke would leave her snout.

"Moon? Kinkajou?" She whispered. Moon was mumbling in her sleep again, and Kinkajou was flopping out of her hammock. Mirage stretched, and stalked out of their cave, limping slightly.

"Hi, Mirage!" Sunny said as she passed. "Glad to see you awake!"

"Awake too early," Mirage groaned. "It's only dawn; I really need to fix my habit."

"I guess Sandwings wake up early," Sunny smiled. "Half-Sandwing, anyways."

Mirage had a strange feeling. Sunny was also a Sandwing hybrid, and she could trust the golden dragon.

"Sunny, I need to talk to you about something. In private," She added. Sunny tilted her head curiously at Mirage, then nodded and led her to her cave.

"Okay, so what do you need to talk about?" She prompted.

"Um, I'm actually a hybrid. Sandwing-Rainwing." Mirage confessed. She shifted back into her normal form. "And an assassin."

"Wow," Sunny breathed. "Tsunami told me that you were an assassin, but I'd never guess that you were a hybrid. Does anyone else know?"

"Only my mother and Moonwatcher." Mirage said. "And Coyote. Used to, anyways."

She remembered the awful memory of Deathbringer telling her that her own father was dead, killed by the Nightwings. And now they

were living in the rainforest alongside the Rainwings. Angry scarlet streaks appeared on her ruff, blue creeping onto her wingtips.

"Oh. Is he..." Sunny trailed off. "Anyways, who can I tell?"

"No one," Mirage stamped out the colors on her scales, switching back to her Sandwing form. "Not ever, unless I tell them."

"Okay." Sunny nodded. "Oh, and Mirage? If you need help, or someone to talk to, you can always come to me."

Mirage met the little Sandwing's green eyes. "Alright."

She walked out of the office, not able to contain the yellow relief that creeped onto her wings.

Chapter 27

Mirage walked to the prey center and found Moon and Kinkajou sharing some fruit, with Qibli sitting next to them eating a chicken. Turtle was coming towards them with a salmon in his talons.

"Hi, Mirage!" Qibli waved. "Come sit with us!"

She nodded curtly, then quickly grabbed a chicken. "Hi."

"Where were you?" Kinkajou asked.

"In Sunny's cave," Mirage ripped off the chicken's head with one swift bite. "Don't ask why."

Moon ducked, hiding behind Turtle. Mirage turned to see why, then saw Winter searching the cave. His eyes met Moon's, and they narrowed.

"One day left," His blue eyes clearly said. Moon looked away, and fixed her gaze on Icicle. The Icewing's wings brushed against a stalagmite.

The sharp rock plummeted on top of Icicle. Moon screamed. Qibli leaped forward, and Sora, who was next to them, looked in excitement and fear, then quickly ran out of the cave.

But just before the stalactite impaled her, Icicle twisted out of the way. The rock crumbled onto the ground, and the Icewing glared at it.

"I knew it," She growled. "*I* was the target all along. They set this up to kill me."

"Who would want to kill you?" Winter snorted. Icicle's face lit up in rage and fury, and Mirage knew immediately that the Icewing knew exactly who it was. Moon stiffened behind the hybrid, and she turned around.

"What?" Mirage asked the Nightwing. Moon looked around, then tugged her out of the cave. Qibli and Kinkajou followed.

"What is it, Moon?" Qibli asked, worried. She ran past them and raced to the library.

"There's not enough time!" Moon shouted. "Icicle will kill her!"

"Who?" Kinkajou yelled. Moon flung out her wings, speeding up.

"Sora!" She cried.

"Icicle's gone to kill Sora!"

Chapter 28

"Sora?" Mirage blinked, then ran to where Moon had went. She had turned a corner and landed in a cave.

"She's so quiet, there's no way- Sora-" Qibli looked startled. Moon flung out of the cave with Umber on her tail.

"There!" Mirage pointed at them. Kinkajou, Qibli, and Mirage raced after them, and into a bigger cave. Sora was near a leaf window, prepared to jump out.

"I'm sorry, Umber!" She cried. "But I couldn't let her live!"

"Why, Sora?" Umber asked, voice cracking.

"It was her! Icicle! She killed Crane!" Sora looked devastated.

"There's no way to prove it. It could be your memory playing tricks on you," He said desperately.

"No, I checked the battle frontlines, and she was there! I was right! She killed Crane!" Sora wailed. Moon was looking far off, then she shook her head, coming back to the scene.

"Sora, go out of this window, and fly far away. Go to the Mudwing kingdom, and don't come back. Icicle's coming to kill you next," She ordered. Sora nodded, and prepared to jump out.

"Moon, be careful. Icicle's dangerous. She talks about killing even in her sleep," She warned. "On the first day, she said, 'Killing is easy enough.'. You can't trust her."

"Go!" Qibli shouted, pushing her through the window. Umber followed his sister.

"Thanks," He mumbled, then took off. Just then, Moon winced, holding her head again.

"It's Icicle!" She cried. "She's going to kill the Dragonets!"

"Which one?" Kinkajou asked. "She'd probably start with the weakest."

"Sunny?" Qibli guessed. Moon shook her head. "Sunny isn't easy to kill."

Mirage figured it out before any of the others.

"Starflight!" She shouted. "She's going to kill Starflight!"

Chapter 29

Moon, Kinkajou, Qibli, and Mirage raced out of the cave and ran to the library. When they arrived, Icicle was already there, Starflight busying himself with a couple of scrolls.

"Starflight!" Moon cried. "Behind you!"

The blind librarian turned around, and Icicle whirled around, hissing.

"You!" She growled, glaring at Moon.

"I think you mean 'You!' as yourself?" Mirage asked drily. "Why are you trying to kill the Dragonets?"

"Queen Scarlet offered her something," Moon murmured. "Some*one*."

Just then, Winter burst into the library.

"Icicle?" He looked worried. "What-"

Icicle had her blue gaze on him, face twisted in fury. "I'll kill Starflight, and you can't do anything! You were weak, never winning any battles in the hatchery! Pathetic!"

Winter's face betrayed no emotion, cold as ice. "But why, Icicle?'

"It's because of him!" She snarled. "Of that NightWing!"

Icicle pointed at Starflight. "They killed him because of this one!"

"But it wasn't his fault!" Moon cried. "Starflight is a dragon who wants to stop killing, not cause it!"

Icicle grinned, her sharp claws reaching to Starflight's throat. "You can't stop me, Winter! You never could! Weak, pathetic!"

Winter snarled in fury, them slammed his whip-thin tail into his

sister's face. Blue blood sprayed everywhere, and Icicle collapsed in a heap of shiny white scales. She struggled to stand back up, and Winter looked down at her with cold fury.

"Hailstorm is dead, and we can't do anything about it," He replied. "It wasn't the NightWing's fault. Queen Scarlet killed him, not Starflight. You're conspiring with Hailstorm's murderer."

Icicle growled.

"You idiot," She snarled. "Hailstorm isn't dead. Queen Scarlet kept her most important prisoners in a tower, and she said she'd give him back if I killed all the Dragonets of Destiny."

Winter gazed at her in shock and sorrow. "Hailstorm's alive?" He cried.

"Yes, he was," Icicle hissed. "And now you ruined all chances of getting him back. I'll give you one last chance. Help me kill the Dragonets, and get Hailstorm back."

Her brother hesitated, then shook his head.

"I want Hailstorm back, but not like this," He insisted. "We need to find another way to free him."

"Fine!" Icicle yowled. "Then I hope you choke on a walrus and die."

Then she leaped out of the leaf window and out of sight.

But not before blasting frostbreath at Starflight.

Chapter 30

Mirage looked in horror as the icy breath seemed to blast at Starflight in slow-motion. She took in a sharp breath, and...

...Leaped right into the path of the frostbreath.

"Mirage!" Kinkajou shrieked.

"No, Mirage!" Qibli reached out, desperation in written all over his face. "Stop!"

But the frostbreath had already reached her. But before it could freeze her heart, Mirage pushed Starflight away and rolled into a tight ball, careful of her barbed tail. Her wingtip got caught in the blast, but she bit back the pain.

"Starflight," Mirage mumbled. Surely the librarian got out of the way safely?

"Here," A shocked voice answered her. "Thank you, Mirage. You saved me."

"Mirage!" Moon wrapped a wing around her body. "Don't frighten me like that again!"

Mirage could tell that the NightWing was holding back tears. She smiled weakly, then shook her wings out. The pain wasn't that bad, and it only shot a light stab of pain up her body.

"I'm fine," She told Kinkajou, who looked ready to burst with fear. "It hardly hurts."

"This might help," Qibli leaned in, his heat uncomfortably close, but easing the pain. Winter was at the back, shooting Mirage a worried look.

"I think Icicle went to rainforest," She interrupted the nervous tension. "She knows that Scarlet hates Queen Glory, and maybe

thinks that killing her would let Scarlet forgive her."

"Then Glory is in danger!" Kinkajou jumped up, ready to fly out of the library.

"Please, stay still, Kinkajou," Moon pleaded. Winter rolled his eyes in exasperation.

"Nu-uh!" The little RainWing shook her head violently. "I'm not standing still waiting for my queen to die!"

"Kinkajou, be reasonable," Mirage barely managed to stop herself turning red. "Glory has an army of invisible, magical-death-spitting RainWings and Deathbringer as a bodyguard. Practically impossible to kill."

"Yes, but she's my queen-"

"Yes, I know that." Mirage stated flatly. Kinkajou flashed several different colors until finally rushing out of the library.

"Well, I'm still worried, and no one can stop me from being that!"

Chapter 31

Mirage sighed, and turned to Moon, Qibli, and Winter.

"Well, I'll just go back to our sleeping cave," She headed out of the library. Starflight stumbled after her, not wanting to stay in the library after the attack. An awkward tension was vibrating behind Mirage as she left, but she shrugged it off, wanting to see Kinkajou.

"Hey," She greeted as she arrived in their cave. Kinkajou was on the floor, scribbling furiously on an empty scroll. "What are you doing?"

"Making a plan to help Glory!" She bounced up and beamed at the hybrid. "She is my best friend, you know. Also my queen, and Glory is awesome!"

"That is exactly why you don't have to worry about her," Mirage pointed out. "As I said already, Glory has an army of invisible RainWings that have death spit, and Deathbringer's stuck to her like the needles of a cactus! You have nothing to worry about."

She patted the worried/excited RainWing. Though Kinkajou looked better, with hints of her usual yellow and pink showing in through spots of lime green, she looked a bit nervous.

"But extra protection is always great!" Kinkajou protested. "And I can be SUPER scary and fierce. Look!"

She bared her fangs and turned an angry red. Her ruff was flared, wings shook out to make her seem larger and menacing. Mirage rolled her eyes, amused, and headed out of the cave.

"Hey! Where are you going?" Kinkajou called, hurrying to catch up. She slowed down right at her tail, where the dragonet looked at the venomous tail-barb -which was glinting dangerously in the light of glowing lamps- with a doubtful look, then carefully walked next to Mirage.

"I'm going to see whether Winter's alright. He should have gone back to his cave." Mirage paused. "Icicle *is* his sister, after all."

She and Kinkajou had been gone for a while. Surely Qibli and Winter had gone to their rooms? From what she had seen from NightWing dragonet, Moon had most likely gone somewhere alone to have some time to think.

"Ooh, I'm coming!" Kinkajou bounced into the IceWing's cave, which he shared with Qibli.

"Never said you could," Mirage snorted jokingly. She padded in the cave after Kinkajou with a swish of her tail. Qibli and Winter weren't there. They had probably just taken some time away from each other.

"Wait, something's weird." Mirage paused. Bandit, the IceWing's scavenger, was missing alongside his cage. "Bandit's not here."

She froze. There was only one reason Winter had left the academy with his scavenger.

"Kinkajou! Winter's going to the RainWing kingdom to get Icicle!"

Chapter 32

"Come on! Let's get Moon and Qibli and Turtle!" Kinkajou raced out of the cave in a blur of yellow and pink scales. Mirage blinked, then zipped out behind her.

"Guys! Did any of you see Winter?" Kinkajou yelled frantically. "He's not in his cave, and Bandit's cage is gone as well!"

"Um, no." Moon mumbled. Qibli tilted his head.

"He told me he was going back to our cave to rest," He muttered. "So...no. That wasn't the actual answer."

"I saw him," Turtle piped up. Mirage whipped around to see the plump SeaWing twisting his tail in nervous circles.

"Where?" She demanded.

"Um. He was flying away from the mountain," Turtle pointed a webbed talon at the entrance. "I thought he went hunting."

"When that idiot had his scavenger's cage in one talon?" Mirage groaned. "Turtle, he must've gone to the rainforest to get Icicle!"

"Sorry," He shrugged. "But how should I have known?"

Mirage rolled her eyes. Qibli hurried between them, raising an eyebrow pointedly at her tail tip, which was glistening dangerously with poison.

"No need, Mirage."

She tucked her tail in tighter to her body, and Moon scooted away from her.

Probably because of all the angry thoughts in my mind right now, Mirage realized. She tried to shut out the angriness, but waves of

frustration at Winter and Qibli and Turtle were rolling out of her, threatening to overflow onto her scales.

Mirage shrugged helplessly at Moon, who smiled weakly at her pathetic attempts to block out her red fury. Suddenly, the NightWing got up and walked over to Turtle.

"Turtle, where did you get those rocks in your armband?" She asked curiously.

"Oh, one day this huge rock hit a lake while my brothers and I were swimming in it. I wanted to explore it a bit, but my brothers didn't, so I went to find it myself.

"It wasn't hard, the water around it was really hot. I found some small pieces chipped off the rock, and put them in this armband," The green SeaWing looked at Moon curiously. "Why?"

She took a deep breath.

"Some dragons can block their minds from mind readers," She explained. "And that rock, skyfire, as Onyx calls it, does that.

Chapter 33

Mirage blinked. Qibli grinned. Kinkajou bounced up and down at the excitement of a new discovery. Turtle looked at his armband with mild respect.

"So I'd like you each to have a piece of skyfire each so that you can have your privacy," Moon said.

"With your permission, Turtle," She added quickly.

"Of course," He started picking out the bits of rock from his armband. When he managed to free them, Turtle handed them each a small rock.

It's hard to believe that this one pebble holds so much power, Mirage thought as she dropped the skyfire into her pouch on her wrist so that it clinked with the library stamp inside.

"Okay, this is a really great discovery and everything, but can we go out to find Winter now?" Qibli interrupted. Mirage smacked herself with a talon. How could she have forgotten?

"Wait, but it's raining. I should go alone," Moon looked at them. "I feel like I owe Winter for lying."

"It'll be fine," Qibli ruffled open his wings, though clearly uncomfortable at the thought of the cold rain.

"Yeah, Moon," Kinkajou turned an alarming shade of pink. "I'm a *Rain*Wing, and I live in the *rain*forest. It practically rains all the *time* in there!"

"But, this weather is going to be-" Turtle was interrupted by the RainWing.

"Come on, it'll be alright!" She shoved him playfully. "You're a SeaWing, you live in water! You practically breathe it!"

"But swimming isn't the same as getting hit in the face with small balls of water!" The SeaWing protested. "Also the lightning. Did we talk about the lightning?"

"He's in," Kinkajou beamed at Moon.

"You don't need to go," She sighed. "Okay, fine. Let's go."

As Mirage took off, trying not to turn orange as the stinging rain hit her scales, she wondered whether Winter would accept help from his winglet.

Chapter 34

"He's near!" Moon gasped. Mirage was soared through the air, scanning for signs of Winter's bright, glimmering scales. A flash of silver caught her eye, and she saw where Moon was pointing.

"Winter!" Kinkajou landed next to him and unfurled her wings to hug him. The IceWing was murmuring something to Bandit, and pushed the RainWing away when she reached out.

"Why are you here?" He demanded.

"To help you," Moon landed with a soft thump, and Qibli touched down next to her.

"Really?" Winter looked furious. Mirage dived down just behind him. The IceWing jumped, startled.

"No, we came out in this rain and risked getting hit by lightning just to scare you," She rolled her eyes.

"Exactly!" Turtle gasped as he collapsed besides her, panting for air. "We could have died!"

"You really need to exercise more," Mirage said pointedly, raising an eyebrow at him. "It wasn't even a long flight."

"No, you don't need- I don't need you to help me," Winter interrupted. "I'm going to Queen Glacier's palace for reinforcements."

"You should try to find Icicle, not get help from a kingdom mountains away," Qibli pointed out.

"Try the rainforest first," Moon suggested. "She might have gone there to kill Glory, and if you want help, the Ice Kingdom isn't far away."

Winter glared at them, and Mirage could almost see the red fury bubbling inside him.

"I don't need help!" He roared. "And you, GET OUT OF HERE!"

He lunged at Bandit, and the scavenger yelped out in fright and scurried away as fast as it could. Moon stared in pity after it, and Mirage turned to face Winter.

"We're coming whether you like it or not," She growled. A gasp of pain sounded from behind the hybrid. She whirled around to find Moon crumpling to the ground, with Kinkajou catching her before the NightWing could hit the ground.

Moon made a strange noise, and a faraway, pained look showed in her eyes. Mirage rushed over to her friend, careful not to touch anyone, and crouched besides her. Then Moon started speaking in a voice nothing like her own:

Beware the darkness of dragons,

Beware the stalker of dreams,

Beware the talons of power and fire,

Beware one who is not what she seems.

Something is coming to shake the earth,

Something is coming to scorch the ground,

Jade Mountain will fall beneath thunder and ice,

Unless...the lost city...of night can be...found.

Chapter 35

"What in all of Pyrrhia was that?" Winter growled.

"A prophecy," Mirage rolled her eyes. "Duh."

"Wow," Kinkajou breathed.

"Winter, there are a couple of things you need to know about me," Moon sighed. "Turtle, please give one of the rocks to Winter."

Turtle pried a rock from his half-empty armband, and handed it to the baffled IceWing.

"I'll tell you everything," Moon twisted her talons in a nervous kind of way.

"Everything? That sounds a bit ominous," Winter snorted.

"Not as ominous as, 'Jade Mountain will fall beneath thunder and ice,'" Qibli shrugged. "That's what I want to talk about."

"I'm pretty sure it meant, death, death, monsters everywhere, and more death," Turtle flashed his glowing stripes nervously.

"But we just need to find the lost city of night, right?" Kinkajou asked. "Then Jade Mountain won't fall!"

"Is that what you saw?" Qibli turned to Moon. "Jade Mountain falling on us?"

"I'm not sure," Moon shook her head. "I've had visions about it, but it didn't come out in words before."

"Actually, it did," Mirage interrupted. "When you're asleep, and you keep repeating the same cryptic words and it's pretty creepy to the ones who are there listening to you."

"Wait, what is this all about?" Winter demanded. "That was a

prophecy, and visions? NightWings aren't supposed to have any powers anymore."

"They can't." Moon said bluntly. "Not anymore, since almost two thousand years ago."

Winter went still as rock.

"Until me," She continued. "Because I hatched in the rainforest, under two full moons. So I can do both."

"Both what?" Winter growled, though Mirage guessed that he already knew.

"See visions of future," Moon hesitated. "And...read minds."

Chapter 36

"So you've been spying on our thoughts, betraying us the moment we stepped into the academy?" Winter hissed.

He let out a plume of frostbreath, freezing the air around him. "I should've expected something like that from a *NightWing*."

"I should've expected this kind of hotheaded response from an *IceWing*," Mirage retorted. "It's not that bad, Winter."

From Winter's expression, Mirage could see it was like the end of the world to him. He glared furiously at Moon and tried to throw Moon out of his mind.

"That won't work, Igloo-face," Mirage sighed. "That rock, skyfire stops mind readers from reaching into your mind.

"It's true, Winter," Moon pleaded. He snorted.

"Sounds like another NightWing lie to me," He snarled. Moon dropped her gaze.

"You're only freaked out because Moon saw all your horrible thoughts," Mirage snapped. "Anyways, our problem is in the rainforest right now."

"I'm going to the Ice Kingdom first," Winter argued. "Not the rainforest. Going to Queen Glacier's palace and getting reinforcements is the right thing to do. And if you follow me, you'll die. Not that I have any objection to that."

"That can't possibly be your plan," Qibli said. "Icicle's probably trying to kill Queen Glory right now, and besides, if you need help, you can get to the Ice Kingdom faster by going through the tunnel that leads to the Kingdom of Sand."

"Okay fine," Winter growled. "But I'm going alone."

"No you're not," Mirage grinned. "We're coming with you, whether you like it or not. Also, that rainforest is crawling with NightWings that might not be best friends with IceWings."

"Yeah!" Kinkajou nodded her head fiercely. "And no one's gonna hurt my awesome queen! Not on my watch!"

"Fine," He gave in after a moment of pestering.

"Wait," Turtle interrupted. Winter hissed. "Shouldn't someone warn Jade Mountain about it crushing everyone?"

"Why don't you go back and warn everyone?" Winter suggested. "That way, the school knows what's happening."

"Yeah- I can do that!" Turtle beamed and unfurled his wings, ready to fly off.

"Wait-" Mirage started. *It's now or never,* She thought to herself.

"What?" Winter growled, annoyed.

"I have to tell you something. All of you."

Kinkajou leaned in curiously, and Qibli gulped in nervousness and anticipation. Mirage took a deep breath, and let her true colors simmer in, turquoise, navy, and purple replacing the sandy gold.

Chapter 37

"What!?" Kinkajou gaped at her.

"You're a *RainWing*?" Winter snorted. "Pathetic."

"Wait," Qibli said slowly, realization dawning on him. "You couldn't have- No RainWing can act out a tail-barb. You're a hybrid?"

"Duh," Mirage sighed. Her friends were slow, slower than she had expected.

"I've always known you were guarding a secret, but never-" The SandWing broke off.

"Guessed that I was part RainWing?" She raised an eyebrow.

"You don't act like one," He muttered. Winter was glancing at Moon.

"You knew."

It wasn't a question, just a statement. Moon nodded, not flinching at his cold gaze.

"Your name must be something different," Qibli tilted his head. "Or the RainWings would have noticed. Or you lived with the SandWings and 'Mirage' is your actual name."

"It's Jasmin," Kinkajou and Mirage informed at the same time.

"I can't believe I didn't notice you were here!" The RainWing shrieked. "You camouflaged so well with the other SandWings, and I never noticed anything strange about you in the rainforest!"

"I can do this," With that, Mirage turned her colorful tail-barb black and dusty yellow, like any other SandWing's and made it invisible.

Turtle blinked several times, then asked, "So...we have to call you

what now? Mirage or Jasmin?"

"Jasmin would be preferable," She nodded. "Yes, call me Jasmin."

"Okay, Mi- I mean, Jasmin," Kinkajou stumbled on her words. Mirage- No, Jasmin grinned.

"Yup," She smirked. "It's going to be extra hard remember my name now."

"Jasmin," Winter turned to her. "Are you a hybrid from three tribes- A tribrid? Or do you have a secret weapon, such as mind reading?"

The IceWing was looking pointedly at her silver scales, which were sparkling under her wings.

"No," Jasmin said defiantly. "And I think venom and a poisonous tail-barb is dangerous enough. Also, that's my normal colors; I can actually look like Moon if I want."

With that, she turned her scales a dark greenish-black with hints of blue, just like Moon, completed with silver stars under her wings and teardrop scales next to her eyes. Jasmin's piercing green eyes were lighter and more sparkly than Moon's, but they would work.

"Wow," The NightWing sidled up besides her, and looked surprised to see another copy of herself.

"Enough blundering around," Jasmin quickly flashed back to her galaxy colors. "We're wasting time. Turtle, go back and warn the school. We have a criminal to catch!"

Chapter 38

"I forgot how humid it was here," Jasmin grumbled. Her scales were an irritated red, with streaks of orange on her ruff. "How did I survive?"

"I think the rainforest is awesome," Kinkajou said loyally, flaring out her yellow wings and accidentally whacking Winter, who was behind them.

"Watch it," He growled. Jasmin could tell that the IceWing was finding it hard to cope with the heat and insects.

"You must hate it here," Moon echoed her thoughts. Winter snapped his head around to face the NightWing. She sighed.

"No, I didn't read your mind," She looked right into his icy blue eyes. "I just guessed that IceWings would hate it here; Hot, humid, and the opposite of the Ice Kingdom. The polar-opposite, actually."

Moon scrunched up her snout as if she was trying not to laugh at her own joke.

"That was terrible," Jasmin commented.

"I think it was great," Qibli jumped in. Winter shot the SandWing a sharp look. Moon suddenly stopped. Jasmin almost bumped into her.

"A NightWing's coming," Moon whispered. "Obsidian. He has dark thoughts all the time."

All five of them scrabbled up a tree and stood still. Jasmin was squashed uncomfortably between Qibli and Kinkajou, and she tried not squirm as the heat coming from the SandWing touched her scales. The RainWing was pressing close to her side, and Jasmin could literally feel the waves of excitement from her.

"Okay, everything's clear," Moon announced after what felt like a

thousand years. "We can go now, but let's be careful."

Jasmin heard someone's stomach rumbling behind her, and she turned around to see Winter looking miserably hungry. A sloth, not her own, was clambering onto a branch besides him, and he reached out eagerly.

"Wait-"

A red blur crashed through the trees and lunged at Winter. Jasmin hastily switched back into her 'Mirage' form and swiftly moved to stand next to him. She pulled the sloth to safety and out of Winter's reach, then grappled the angry RainWing onto the ground and stifled a gasp as the air was knocked out of her.

"No one hurts Toe Fur!" The RainWing hissed, right in her ear. "Or they'll pay."

Chapter 39

Jasmin grunted, then flipped the RainWing onto the ground and pressed her front claws on her chest to stop her from escaping.

"Exquisite?" She gasped, recognizing one of the past queens.

"How do you know me?" Exquisite asked. She was still a bright shade of red, but a curious shade of blue swept through her wings.

Jasmin sighed and reluctantly shimmered back into her normal colors, not bothering to hide her tail-barb. Exquisite opened her mouth to speak, but another voice interrupted her.

"Winter, don't eat any of the sloths," Kinkajou said sternly from above. "They're our cute, fluffy pets, not food."

The sound of the IceWing grunting followed. Kinkajou popped her head out from the treetops and looked at the two fallen dragons below.

"Um," She said. "Did you tackle Exquisite, Jasmin?"

"No, I fell out of the trees and dragged her down with me to have a wonderful party," She snapped. "What do you think, bug-brain?"

Qibli snorted in laughter from the trees, and Jasmin heard Moon trying to shush him up.

"Qibli, stay quiet!" She hissed. "Obsidian's back with a RainWing guard."

He went silent, and Jasmin ushered a confused Exquisite out of the way.

"Oh, for all the moons, get out of here!" She shoved the RainWing away when she didn't budge. Jasmin camouflaged into the trees, and waited for Moon to say it was safe to come out.

"We should-" Moon was cut off as Kinkajou burst through the canopy above.

"Hi!" She beamed. "We're here! Come out!"

"-Not do that," Qibli finished. Jasmin groaned. The RainWing had exposed them all. The NightWing guard was coming. Just then, Obsidian, the one with dark thoughts, trudged out of the trees and stopped right besides her. Another RainWing, Bromeliad, followed, a scowl on her face.

"Oh, it's you," Kinkajou said in disappointment. "I thought were Orchid."

"You!" Bromeliad snarled. "Why are you outside the academy? I told the queen that you were a terrible student and shouldn't be allowed in there! But would she listen? Surprisingly, no!"

"We're here because of important business," Kinkajou's scales were turning an impatient orange. "Nothing you should care about."

Bromeliad growled.

"We'll take you back to the NightWing village," Obsidian growled. "New dragons need to go there. And you, IceWing, come down so I can see you."

Jasmin slumped down. The NightWing had spotted Winter. They were dead.

Chapter 40

Jasmin watched as Winter thumped down onto the ground besides Obsidian, Qibli and Moon right behind him.

"Oh, you're the weird little NightWing," Obsidian raised his eyebrows. "And you're back. Caused trouble, didn't you? Let's get these new dragons to the village."

"Excuse me?" Kinkajou flared her wings. "I'm not new! I'm a *RainWing*! I *live* here! So does Moon! We don't need to go to the village!"

"Kinkajou, we should go to the NightWing village," Moon said softly. "Then I can see my mother again."

"Oh." The RainWing stopped. "Well, we'll go. But not because someone ordered us to!"

Jasmin followed the group as they trudged through the rainforest and neared the NightWing village. She moved swiftly and silently, not crunching a single leaf.

When they arrived at the village, Jasmin surveyed the area. NightWings were *everywhere*. Building huts, eating, cooking a small pig, just like everything was normal.

"Mother!" Moon cried, and ran into the arms of a thin NightWing.

"Moon!" Secretkeeper wrapped her wings around her daughter. "Why are here?"

"To see Glory," Kinkajou gazed somewhat wistfully at the two. With a jolt, Jasmin remembered that the RainWing didn't know who her mother or father was. The hybrid was lucky; Euphoria cared for her and would protect her life. Coyote...

"Winter, Qibli," She hissed, pushing her father out of her mind. "It's me, Jasmin."

Winter jumped slightly, but Qibli stood perfectly still.

"Jasmin, I think you should stay hidden," He murmured under his breath. "If we get into trouble of sort, at least one of us can be safe."

"Okay," She sighed. "I can't hide from Glory though."

Or Deathbringer, Jasmin realized. Their training had included spotting camouflaged RainWings as well as hiding herself.

She'd just have to last until then.

Chapter 41

Jasmin tapped her invisible tail on the ground impatiently. The others were hanging around and taking their time.

"When are we going to go?" She prodded Qibli hard on the shoulder with a claw.

"Ow!" He rubbed his shoulder. "Um, soon."

"Guys!" Kinkajou bounced towards them. "Where's Jasmin?"

"Here." She whispered.

"When do we go?" Qibli repeated Jasmin's question.

"Uh," Kinkajou paused. "As soon as Moon comes back."

"No you're not!" Obsidian snapped. "You're staying here until the queen comes!"

"We're not new, and these are friends." Jasmin hissed in his ear. "And if you try to stop us, I'll make sure I kill you the most painful way possible, starting by melting your face off."

Obsidian jumped, shrieked in fear, and hurried away.

Eventually, Moon came back, and the group headed towards the RainWing village.

"How are we going to find Icicle in this giant place?" Winter asked. "Glory would probably be killed before we find her."

"We need to warn Glory first, then," Jasmin decided, now back to her normal form. "She'll have a higher chance of survival."

"So," He growled. "We're *not* finding Icicle? That's actually the only reason I let you come."

"You don't *let* me come," She retorted. "I come if I want!"

A flash of black zipped past her vision. Jasmin whipped around, switching back into Mirage.

"Who's there?" She growled. A NightWing slammed into Winter. The hybrid leaped at him, and the IceWing roared in fury.

"Get off, you pathetic NightWing!" Jasmin snarled, shoving his attacker away none too gently. "Leave Winter alone!"

"Oh, but he's an intruder in this rainforest," The NightWing smirked. "IceWing, you're under arrest."

Jasmin was filled with dread. She had hoped to avoid this particular dragon, but, of course, that was impossible.

She was face-to-face with Deathbringer again.

Chapter 42

"Oh, it's you," Jasmin shifted back to her normal colors. Qibli tilted his head at her.

"Wait, it's you," Her scales turned a violent shade of red with orange streaks. "*You*. Stay away from him!"

"But, Jasmin," He protested, ignoring her scales. "This is the IceWing in the rainforest. He's dangerous."

"This IceWing is Prince Winter," Jasmin retorted. "You're supposed to find Icicle, his *sister."*

"She's right," Queen Glory shifted into a royal blue lined with gold. Kinkajou bounced up besides her.

"Glory!" She shouted. "We're here to protect you from Winter's sister, who, by the way, is coming to MURDER you, how freaky is that? Oh, and she almost killed Starflight, and it was kind of scary. Also, hi, school's great, how are you?"

"Kinkajou," Glory frowned. "You're not supposed to leave the academy. And you two," She added, glancing at Jasmin and Moon. "Actually, none of you should be here." She frowned.

"Sorry!" Kinkajou squeaked.

"Sorry," Moon said softly. Glory turned to the other, silent three dragonets. She raised an eyebrow as they didn't say anything.

"Sorry." Qibli sighed.

"Sorry," Winter grumbled.

"...Sorry." Jasmin muttered reluctantly. "But we're here because we're trying to save you from Icicle assassinating you."

"What I'm trying to do right now," Deathbringer cut in. "Ahem."

"Not doing a very good job, aren't you?" Jasmin snapped. "Not even noticing this IceWing's a male."

"Anyways," Glory interrupted as the NightWing opened his mouth to argue back. "We'll need to get you to the RainWing village. Sunny and the others are worried sick! What were you thinking about, leaving like that when a murderer's running around?"

"Didn't Turtle tell them where we went?" Qibli asked.

"Oh, a great lot of help that was," The queen snorted. "Hello, a whole winglet of five year olds went off to find Icicle and Scarlet, so no pressure. Just great."

"So we'll go, tralala, stay 'Completely safe' in an academy stuck under a mountain? Where a great flaming cactus exploded the history cave and killed a bunch of dragonets along the way? And a murder almost occurred in the library? So safe. I feel so assured I won't get killed." Jasmin retorted.

Kinkajou nudged her with a grin, and that earned her a shove from Jasmin so hard it blasted the RainWing into a nearby tree.

Chapter 43: Picture of Jasmin by @General_Serpentine

[image]

Shoutout to @General_Serpentine for making this awesome drawing of Jasmin for me! Thank you, it's perfect!

Chapter 44

When the group arrived at the RainWing village, Jasmin breathed out sharply. She had forgotten how beautiful it was. A happy, proud shade of purple washed over her, and this time, she didn't stop it.

"Do you know where Euphoria is?" Jasmin asked Glory softly. "I want to see her again."

With a pang of guilt, she realized she hadn't thought of her mother once.

"She's out fruit gathering," Glory replied. Jasmin wilted a bit. "But she'll be back soon. Oh, here she comes."

Sure enough, Euphoria's gradient pink-purple scales emerged from a patrol of other RainWings.

"Mother!" Jasmin cried, then leaped into her arms.

"Jasmin!" Euphoria gasped, then wrapped her yellow wings around her dragonet. "I missed you! Why are you here?"

"To find Winter's sister," She looked up at her worried green eyes. "Who's a murderer, by the way. In this rainforest."

"Really?" A cascade of blue, lime, and several other anxious colors pulsed through Euphoria's scales. "Are you sure it was safe for you to come here?"

"Yes," Jasmin nodded. "Queen Glory's in danger, as well as Icicle if she's found. NightWings and IceWings aren't exactly best friends."

"Um, sorry to interrupt the heart-warming meeting," Qibli cut in. "But we really should go find Icicle right now."

"Right," She agreed quickly. "Bye, mother, love you, take care!"

The hybrid turned to the others. A few RainWings were lined up

lazily, and a messenger was standing near them.

"Okay, did any of you see an IceWing today?" Glory asked. "If you don't remember you're learning, they're the blue or white dragons with spiky tails."

"You're Majesty," A RainWing loudly whispered. "I think there's one *right behind me!*"

All the RainWings in the sloppy line turned to Winter.

"*That's* an IceWing?"

"It's so spiky!"

"And *cold!*"

Winter yanked his wings out of reach as a RainWing tried to touch it. Jasmin sighed.

"This is going to take a long time." She grumbled.

Chapter 45

Finally, Moon and Glory pried out some information from the messenger.

"I did see a spot near the Banyan Tree," He mused. "It was all cold and frozen. Oh, and the air was really chilly!"

"Icicle's in this rainforest right now," Winter murmured, half to himself.

"Yes," Glory flared her purple wings, not betraying a single hint of emotion, on her scales and her face. "Prince Winter, we'll go and investigate the Banyan Tree."

"Oooh, can I go?" Kinkajou asked, bouncing up and down.

"Can I go?" Moon fidgeted with her tail. "I can be useful, I can-"

"Can I go?" Jasmin interrupted quickly. Moon had almost spilled out her secret. "I'll be useful if Icicle attacks. Trying not to kill her, of course. Trying."

"These two can go," Winter nodded briskly at Moon and Jasmin. "Not her. She's way too loud."

"What?!" Kinkajou huffed. "I'm SUPER quiet, WHAT do you MEAN?"

"You're just proving his point," Jasmin pointed out.

Glory tilted her head curiously at Winter, and looked over at Moon.

"Well, anyways, let's go," She announced, and set off into the forest. Jasmin grinned at Winter, then launched into the air, twisting out of reach from the vines and branches. Moon followed, gliding through the trees. Winter crashed through to fly besides them all.

"I don't like flying in the rainforest," He grumbled. "Too much obstacles to smack into."

"I'm fine with the trees," Jasmin offered. Her small size made it easy to dodge the branches, and her smooth assassin reflexes helped twist through unexpected vines.

Moon ducked under a branch, and Jasmin couldn't help admire her clean passes through the rainforest. She was quite graceful, almost as quiet and fast as herself. Jasmin was so occupied with watching the NightWing's grace, she didn't notice the tree in front until it was almost touching her.

"Oof," She grunted, swerving quickly out of the way. Her scales brushed past its rough bark. "That was a close call."

"I was looking forward to see an assassin crashing into a tree," Winter snickered. A branch smacked him in the face.

"Ha!" Jasmin barked out a laugh. "The only thing you'll be seeing is a whole bunch of who-knows-what's in your face."

Moon smiled. Glory turned around after a stray vine looped around a wing.

"You know, with all that noise you're making back there, it's a surprise you call that sneaking around." She raised her eyebrows.

Qibli came out from behind a large tree, looking at the queen sheepishly. "Sorry, but I want to come with you."

Jasmin just rolled her eyes.

Chapter 46

Jasmin peered at the Banyan Tree. It was almost all frozen, except for a rough circle on the ground. The frost had melted halfway, into a muddy puddle of snow. Jasmin examined the circle carefully.

"Something blocked the spray of frostbreath," She noted. Winter's blue eyes were wide with shock. "Or...some*one*."

The hybrid walked over to the roots of the huge tree. They were almost as big as a dragon.

"I found what blocked the spray," Winter announced. He dragged a bundle of black scales out of the roots. "A NightWing."

Flashes of silver twinkled as the dead NightWing's stiff wings flapped about. Moon shuddered, and Qibli rested a calm wing on her shoulder. Jasmin frowned at the body.

"Wait a minute..." She poked at the cold scales. Blue frost had spread throughout the NightWing's corpse, but as she felt between its scales, Jasmin realized an important clue. "This dragon was dead for only a few moments. So Icicle must be close by."

"Really?" Glory scratched her chin thoughtfully.

"Yep," Jasmin nodded. "I have experience myself. Not that I died from another dragon. The opposite, actually."

Moon's face paled.

"So Icicle's in this rainforest right now?" Winter growled.

"And just killed a random NightWing?" Qibli interfered.

"Yep." She repeated. Glory sighed. Moon scrunched up her snout, and Jasmin flared her wings out.

"We should get back to the village," She called out. "And report

what happened."

"The NightWings and so going to set their heads on fire," Qibli said. "No, wait, they're going to set the closest IceWing's head on fire. Winter, I hope your skull's as thick as it seems."

"I'm hoping it is," Jasmin snorted, and followed quickly as Glory lifted off into the dark forest.

Chapter 47

Glory, Jasmin, Winter, Qibli, and Moon arrived at the queen's pavilion. Deathbringer was there, stomping around and fuming.

"Where have you been?!" He roared.

"The Banyan Tree," Glory replied.

"By yourself?" He demanded.

"You can't always be there, you know." She sighed, and turned to the other dragonets.

"You five aren't safe with a murderer on the loose," Glory said. "Especially you, Prince Winter. The NightWings will want revenge, and they might attack the closest IceWing they can see."

"So we'll leave," Jasmin looked into her queen's deep green eyes. "We'll catch Scarlet and find Winter's brother."

"No." Glory straightened up and stared into Jasmin's own sparkling green eyes. "You won't be safe. Any of you. You'll be kept in the hatchery until Icicle has been dealt with."

"What?!" Winter growled. "She's my sister, for moon's sake! I have the right to find her!"

"I'm also probably very safe," Jasmin informed. "I can deal with a little IceWing problem. Dealt with a lot of them, actually. No need to stuff me in a small room full of bouncy dragonets, thank you."

Deathbringer let out a snort of laughter.

"I can probably snap your pathetic neck *right now*, this *instant*," She glared at him. "I'm barely containing myself."

Which was very true. Her claws itched to claw at the NightWing's throat. But that wouldn't be the best way to repay a dragon who

actually taught her to claw someone's neck.

"I'm so scared right now," Deathbringer said drily.

"Alright, settle down, settle down." Glory interrupted. "Jasmin, and you guys as well, you'll stay in the hatchery."

"But that's not fair!" Kinkajou burst out, her scales a desperate shade of indigo. "We need to go out! What about you? You're the least safe right now!"

"I'll be fine," Glory waved the words away. "But you will go stay in the hatchery. Kinkajou, you chose me to be queen, you'll have to listen to me.

Eventually, the winglet reluctantly made their way to the hatchery. A NightWing guard examined them, grumbling under her breath.

"I don't get it," She muttered. "We're supposed to get intruders *away* from our dragonets, not stick them *together*."

A guard stared worriedly at Winter's snout. ("That's just his face," Jasmin informed. "He just looks a bit mad."). They spent a full minute examining Qibli and Jasmin's tail-barbs.

"SandWing dragonets learn to control their tail-barbs at a young age," Qibli assured the guards. He curled his tail inward, away from the dragons, and they jumped out of the way. Jasmin bared her teeth at them as one inspected her tail-barb and fangs.

"I won't kill you," She snarled. "But only just."

Jasmin flicked her tail dangerously close to one of the guard's side, and he backed away.

"You sure she's safe?" He asked the others worriedly.

"I've lived here for my whole life," She growled impatiently. "And I didn't kill any dragonets while in rainforest. But my tail might just accidentally slip, and scratch you on the side."

Jasmin let her tail bounce closer to the guard, and the venomous tip

almost grazed his side, missing by less than a scale. He shrieked, and ran away into the trees.

"Oops." She grinned. The remaining guard looked at her warily, then moved out of the way so they could all get in.

"Why did you do that?" Qibli asked curiously.

"Because I wanted to have some last bit of fun before freaking out in that tight room," Jasmin sighed, wings drooping. "I have extreme claustrophobia; It's a miracle I didn't kill myself in Jade Mountain."

Chapter 48

Jasmin took a deep breath before stepping into the hatchery. Immediately, a wave of anxiety, worry, fright, and uncomfortableness washed over her. Her scales turned a shade of lime green and gray, and she couldn't stamp out the colors.

"Don't worry," Moon whispered reassuringly. "It'll be fine."

"It's very amusing to see an ultra-deadly assassin being scared of small spaces," Winter smirked slightly. "When she's very small herself."

"Don't annoy me or make me mad," Jasmin growled. "Because when I'm claustrophobic, I tend to kill dragons. I might kill a dragon right now. Actually, maybe two dragons. Arrgh."

"Ookay," Qibli scooted away from her slightly. "Great."

About twelve small dragonets were playing roughly near the middle of the stuffy hatchery. They were all black, but as the dragons had stepped inside, nine of them became delighted shades of colors.

"Wow! So glittery!" One squealed, bouncing up to Winter.

"Look! I can do that!" Another shouted, and scrunched his forehead up in concentration. Soon, he became a shade of crystal-blue. Almost the same as the IceWing.

"Hmm," Kinkajou looked intensely at Winter, then turned to the dragonet. "It's great, but try to make your horns like his spikes."

Soon, the dragonet's horns shifted around, and soon, he looked like a smaller version of Winter.

"Ooh!" A third dragonet trotted up to Qibli. He made a face at her, and she made one back. A shimmer of colors sparkled onto her scales, and the dragonet turned the same sandy color as the SandWing, complete with darker scales freckling her snout and a

scar zig-zagging across it.

"Are you okay?" Moon asked Jasmin. The hybrid had curled up in a tight ball of scarlet and lime, wings covering her body.

"What do you think?" She snarled. "No."

"We should try to escape," Winter came up to the two of them. "So get up."

She reluctantly uncurled herself and stood up. "How?"

"I know!" Kinkajou turned to the dragonets. "Okay, everyone! We're gonna play hide-and-seek! You need to find us after counting to one thousand. Obviously, I'll win, because I'm a RainWing."

A waterfall of colors waved dramatically onto her wings. The baby dragons all cooed in approval. They covered their eyes, and started shouting out random numbers.

"One! Five! Twenty three!" They yelled.

"I forgot," Kinkajou ran to a corner. "RainWings can't count. We need to be quick."

"Forty five!" The dragonets shouted. "A hundred twenty eight! Two hundred!"

"Pretty quick," Jasmin noted wryly.

Chapter 49

"I could blast a hole through the wall," Qibli offered.

"Don't you dare!" Kinkajou shook her head. "No fire in my rainforest, thank you!"

"Um, can we go more quickly?" Jasmin asked.

"Yeah, we better," Qibli agreed. "The dragonets are almost done counting."

"Five hundred forty seven! Six hundred eleven!" They shouted, proving his point.

"That, too." She flicked her tail nervously. "But I might hurt anyone any time right now."

"I have an idea." Winter shoved Qibli out of the way. He blew a plume of frostbreath at a corner, making a hole big enough for all five of them to crawl through. "I'll go first."

"Wait!" Moon stopped him. She paused, and Jasmin guessed that she was listening for any minds outside. "Okay, you can go now.

The IceWing pushed his way through the blackened leaves. Jasmin quickly followed, shivering slightly as the frostbitten leaves grazed her tucked wings. After a moment, she jumped up, relieved to be free of the uncomfortable closeness of the hatchery.

"Whew," The hybrid wiped a bead of sweat off her forehead. A cascade of colors poured through her scales, and Jasmin finally settled to a calm blue-purple.

"We need to hurry," Moon said as she went came out into the open. Kinkajou followed her lead. "The dragonets will notice soon enough that we're not in there anymore."

"Oh, it'll be fine," Kinkajou reassured the NightWing. "You wouldn't

believe how thoroughly they search the hatchery before giving up. They search every square inch; It's like a RainWing obsession."

"Great, and also; I have an idea where Icicle might be," Jasmin added. "The old home of the NightWings."

"So you mean she's in-" Qibli started.

"Yup," She finished. "The volcano."

Chapter 50

"Why would she-" Winter sputtered. "I mean- She's not a NightWing, is she?"

"Maybe," Jasmin shrugged. "But can't you see? That's where the least RainWings go, but right inside the RainWing kingdom. Perhaps she even thought that Glory would go there to investigate."

"You're right." Qibli scratched his chin with a claw. "So we can just go over to the Night Kingdom, right?"

"Yes." Jasmin nodded. "You make it sound easy, but trust me, it probably isn't"

"Guys!" Moon whispered frantically. "Some guards are coming! We need to hide, quickly!"

"Okay! Follow me!" Kinkajou flew to a tree and gestured at a hole beneath. She quickly camouflaged into a crackly brown, the color of the wood. The last thing Jasmin saw of the RainWing was a flash of yellow. Qibli squeezed in, his dusty yellow barely visible.

"Jasmin, I know you don't like tight spaces," He called out softly. "So you can go turn invisible in the trees if you want."

"Thanks," She muttered, and quickly let the forest green wash over her. Winter was having trouble hiding in the small space.

"Why are you so shiny?" Kinkajou fretted. "Nothing natural is that color!"

"I'll take care of it," Moon said softly. She rushed inside the hollow and turned her back to the outside. A blur of movements rustled inside as the NightWing wrapped her wings around Winter's blue and white scales.

"Better." Jasmin had a distinctive feeling of an invisible dragon grinning in pleasure. The sound of talons trampling on the soft

rainforest ground was heard as a patrol of NightWings ran past. The hybrid smirked as they went right past the tree her friends were at.

"You can come out now," She told the rest of them as the patrol passed by. "They're gone."

Moon, Winter, and Qibli crawled out of the hollow as Kinkajou un-camouflaged.

"We should get moving now," Moon said as she shot an apologetical gaze at Winter.

Why, Jasmin asked herself, *would she do that? Moon didn't even do anything wrong.*

She shrugged, then flared her wings and flew towards the tunnel to the volcano.

Chapter 51

Jasmin frowned as a wave of heat rushed into her snout. The tunnel's end had neared, and it was getting hotter and hotter as they proceeded forward.

"Woah," She looked around as they all climbed out. "Nice."

"Not very." Winter sniffed. Jasmin shot him an amused smile.

"Kinkajou, are you okay?" Moon asked suddenly. The little RainWing had turned lime green, gray, blue, and all sorts of nervous or frightened colors. She had also stopped moving too much, which Jasmin found very worrying.

"I'm fine," Kinkajou vanished for a second, then reappeared. Her wings were still slightly ruffled.

"You too?" Jasmin asked. "Me too."

"Oh," Qibli said suddenly. "You both are one of the RainWings the NightWings tested on, right? I've heard of it, but..."

"Not me." She scooted away. "Kinkajou did. I just had my- I knew someone who experienced something similar."

Jasmin remembered the terrible memory, listening to Deathbringer tell her about her own father's death. A tragic death.

Your fault, your fault, your fault, The hybrid's mind whispered. *Coyote was caught trying to see you, remember? All your fault...*

Jasmin shook her head, clearing her brain. "Anyways. Kinkajou, you sure you're alright?"

"Yeah. Totally." The RainWing started forward again. Winter gave Kinkajou an odd look, frowning.

"We need to try find Icicle," He squinted at a faraway river of lava,

as if he was trying to find any hint of shining silver scales.

"This smoke is just, wow." Qibli tried to wave away the smoke. "Wow."

"Kind of cool," Jasmin started to say, but a cough shook away the words. "Never mind. Nope, not at all."

Just then, a glimmer of pale, icy blue caught her sharp eye. She opened her mouth to warn the others, but the hybrid saw where the ice dragon was headed for.

"Look out!" She hissed, leaping at Kinkajou. The dragonet shrieked in surprise, but Jasmin threw her aside with ease.

"What are you doing?" Moon started to cry, but stopped. Jasmin whipped around to find Icicle growling, sharp claws outstretched. Jasmin lunged at the IceWing, dodging her attacks, and grappled her down. Soon, Icicle was struggling underneath her, the hybrids strong talons at her neck.

"One wrong move and you're dead." Jasmin snarled. "You know what'll happen."

Chapter 52

"Woah," Kinkajou stood up, blinking. "That was fast!"

"Why are you trying to help Scarlet?" Jasmin hissed to Icicle. "Your brother might be dead, and she could just be playing with you!"

"You don't know anything," She snarled. "She'll kill me. I failed, and she'll see me again!"

"How?" Qibli asked. "Scarlet can't get to you here."

"Oh," Moon breathed. "Qibli, don't you get it? Scarlet has a dreamvisitor! But she must have caught you sleeping..."

"No," Icicle grinned maniacally. "If I don't sleep, she can't find me. She never will!"

"Oh, wow." Winter stepped forward. "But...you must be tired, with no sleep. No dragon can survive that long without rest!"

"Whenever I want to fall asleep, I lie down besides one of the lava pools, and the pain wakes me up," She twisted around from underneath Jasmin and spread one battered wing to show painful blisters. Jasmin shivered, wondering how the IceWing had even survived in this place.

"But how do you know your brother's still alive?" She asked again.

Before the IceWing could reply, a small blur zoomed past Jasmin and hit Icicle in the side, and Queen Glory burst through the tunnel followed by a patrol of RainWings.

"Princess Icicle of the IceWings," She declared, holding up a dart gun. "You are under arrest for trying to harm and kill our tribes."

Icicle let out a roar of fury, clawing at the dart stuck between her scales.

"What did you do to me!?" She growled.

"Don't worry, it's only a sleeping dart," A pink RainWing, Jambu, scratched his head. "No need to panic. You'll wake up after a while."

Icicle's eyes went wide with panic.

"NO!!!" She roared again. "She'll get me! Don't make me sleep!"

The IceWing scratched Jasmin painfully on her side, and she let go, knowing that Icicle couldn't do any harm anymore. The IceWing opened her mouth, letting a simmer of frostbreath freeze her scales.

"She's trying to hurt herself!" Moon cried, but Icicle's eyes were already starting to droop with sleep. Her stiff posture relaxed, and she slumped to the ground.

"Winter..." Icicle whispered. Her brother rushed to her side. "She'll get me...She's going to kill me."

Winter murmured something so soft, even Jasmin's sharp ears couldn't hear what he said. But as she strained to hear, she heard something that made her blood freeze.

"...kill her myself," He whispered. Jasmin stiffened. Winter was prepared to kill someone.

But who?

Chapter 53

Jasmin stayed quiet the entire time as she followed Qibli, Winter, Moon, and Kinkajou out of the tunnel and into the dark rainforest. She thought about what Winter had said.

Kill who? She wondered. *Kinkajou? Moon? Glory? Scarlet?*

Jasmin touched down lightly on the wooden planks in front of the healer's treehouse, stopping in front of the entrance.

Me?

She shook the thought out of her mind. Why was she so worried? If Winter planned to kill Moon, Kinkajou, Glory, or herself, Jasmin could get him first. But she was still shaken.

Would Winter actually try to kill one of us? She wondered. *Even a queen that rules two tribes?*

Would he kill his friends, just for a sister that hates him?

For once, Jasmin didn't know.

"Are you okay?" She snapped out of her thoughts as Moon poked her head out of the entrance. "You're very quiet."

Jasmin shrugged, but an unstoppable urge came over her.

"Moon," She began. "I've heard a bit of what Winter said to Icicle, and it was very...disturbing."

"What did he say?" The NightWing dragonet tilted her head curiously.

"Well, it was only a bit of the end," Jasmin hesitated, not wanting to stress her out. "'Kill her myself.' That's what he said. I'm not sure who he meant, but-" She broke off coughing.

"Jasmin," Moon furrowed her eyebrows. "Are you alright?"

"I'm totally-" Another coughing fit racked her body. "-fine. Just some smoke..."

Moon shot her one last concerned look, then went back into the healer's hut. Jasmin gasped for breath, trying to soothe her burning throat.

What's wrong with me? She thought as she followed the NightWing's tail. The hybrid blinked away the sudden darkness inside the hut. As she got used to the darkness, Jasmin saw the outlines of her friends. Moon took a seat besides Icicle, who was lying down in a hammock, a frown on her face.

"She's dreaming," Moon breathed, closing her eyes. Jasmin stifled another cough, trying to get rid of the smell of smoke. "Scarlet's there."

After a few moments, Moon finally opened her eyes. "Pass me a scroll. Paper. Anything."

Kinkajou ran out of the hut and returned a few minutes later with an empty scroll.

"There were mountains behind Queen Scarlet," The NightWing dragonet sketched out wide lines overlapping each other, like the churning waves of the ocean. "They looked slightly like this."

"I've never seen any mountains like this," Qibli frowned, then passed the drawing to Winter. He shook his head, then gave the scroll to Jasmin.

"You've seen more than any of us," His dark blue eyes were crowded with mixed emotions. "You must've seen these mountains before."

Jasmin leaned in, inspecting the drawing closely. "These mountains...I feel like I've seen them before. It's not Jade Mountain, for sure. Maybe Claws of the Clouds Mountain? Or near Scarlet's palace? Somewhere near the Sky Kingdom?"

"Hmm." Kinkajou lit up suddenly. "We could ask Deathbringer! He

must know! He's seen almost the whole continent!"

Jasmin sighed, wings drooping.

Chapter 54

Deathbringer hadn't seen the mountains before, too.

"You could ask the Talons of Peace," He offered. "They should know. Also, stop glaring at me!"

Jasmin had been glaring at the assassin for the entire conversation. "I can do whatever I want, *NightWing*." She retorted hotly. The hybrid broke off in a coughing fit. "Not again." She groaned, catching her breath.

"Are you sure you're alright?" Qibli asked, concerned.

"Of course!" Jasmin bristled, but her voice was hoarse and dry. "Why wouldn't I be?"

"Well, anyways." Deathbringer carried on. "I guess I could help you, if Glory approves of you leaving."

"How nice of you to check," The young queen materialized out of the darkness, lit up by several glow-in-the-dark moths flittering around. "Qibli and Prince Winter can choose what they want. But I am slightly concerned about having three of my favorite subjects facing danger all by themselves."

"Did you hear that?" Kinkajou nudged Moon lightly with a grin. "Favorite."

"The part you should have heard is dangerous," Glory sighed. "With Burn and Blister dead, Scarlet is probably the most dangerous dragon in Pyrrhia."

"But then we can find out where she locked up Hailstorm, and maybe let him free." Moon insisted.

"Fine, you can go," Glory finally permitted. "But be careful; don't interact with Scarlet. Don't mess with any queens. Don't get hurt."

"We won't," Jasmin promised impatiently, then immediately let out a series of coughs, shaking her entire body and rubbing her throat raw. "We'll be fine." She finished weakly.

"I don't get why you're all coming with me," Winter grumbled. "I can do this all myself. Why do you care about what happens to Hailstorm?"

"They care about you," Glory replied.

"For some reason," Deathbringer added.

"Entertainment value," Qibli offered with a straight face. Winter growled, then spread his glittering wings, getting ready to fly. He lifted off, and Jasmin shook out her own, smaller wings, prepared to face the cold wind.

"Wait," Glory suddenly interrupted. Winter glanced back, then thumped back down. "I won't stop you, but on one condition; Jasmin, you'll stay here."

Chapter 55

"WHAT?!" Jasmin roared in fury, which turned into another bone-racking cough. "Why? You can't stop me!"

"You're in no condition to fight and fly," Glory explained, not fazed at all by her furious colors. "You're still recovering from the explosion, and that trip to the NightWing Kingdom didn't improve your health."

"I have to agree with Glory," Deathbringer nodded.

"You're opinion doesn't count," Jasmin growled. "And you always agree with her."

"Jasmin, please," Moon pleaded. "Just stay here. After you get better, you'll catch up with us."

"Never." She shook her head stubbornly, her claws raking the wooden planks. "I'm coming."

"Jasmin, I am your queen," Glory straightened up, a commanding indigo washing over her scales. "You need to listen to me."

"Fine." She reluctantly agreed. "But how do I find you?"

"We could meet between SandWing and SkyWing territory," Qibli suggested. "Then it'll be easy for all of us to reach each other."

"Okay. But I'm coming really soon!" Jasmin shot her queen a look. "Whether or not they try to stop me."

She huffed, then flew back to the RainWing village. "And I'm staying in the desert, too!" She called. Glory shook her head, exasperated, then turned to the remaining dragonets.

"Stop me! As if!" Jasmin muttered to herself, but obeyed Glory's orders and landed in front of the tunnel entrance. She walked through, shivering as the tingling feeling of animus magic washed

over her. She dug a deep nest in the cool sand, and wriggled inside, feeling the warmth.

"I'm coming, soon..." She murmured, and sleep washed over her tired scales.

Chapter 56

It had been a few weeks since Jasmin had been stuck inside the rainforest. It was boring, uneventful, but nice. Her cough got better, she got more time with Euphoria, and, better yet, she could finally get little trips out the healer's hut.

"A few hours?" Jasmin shrugged. "Better than nothing."

"Be back before it's dark!" Bullfrog called as she glided smoothly through the trees.

Soon, she reached the tunnel to get to the Kingdom of Sand. Jasmin ran through with no hesitations, and flew straight to the Scorpion Den. She made sure she was back into her SandWing form, though.

"Where were you?" A furious customer snapped. "I have a victim, and you haven't been here for weeks!"

"A great assassin you are!" Another SandWing, who had yellow scales so pale they were almost white, lashed her long tail. She had cornered Jasmin in an empty alley. "How can you leave with so much of us waiting?"

Jasmin looked coolly at her. "I can come whenever I want, thank you very much."

She casually lashed out a strong talon and raked them across the startled SandWing's face. She let out a howl of pain.

"That'll teach you to try ordering me around." Jasmin snarled, then thrust her tail-barb through the SandWing's throat. She let out a strangled cry, blood gurgling at the corners of her mouth, then fell still.

Cleaning the blood off her scales, Jasmin flew off, a familiar feeling of excitement and danger overwhelming her. It was almost night,

and the blue sky was streaked with red and orange, as if a dragonet had slashed paint over the pale blue.

Jasmin smiled all the way back to the rainforest.

A few days later, the healer's announced that she could leave now.

"Really?" Jasmin cried with glee when they nodded. She grinned happily, and said her goodbyes to Glory and her mother.

"I'll be alright," Jasmin comforted Euphoria. "I survived a great explosion and some close calls, right?"

"I know," The pale pink RainWing sighed. "But, dear, be careful, alright?"

"I will," Jasmin promised. She gave Euphoria a rare hug, and flew off to the Scorpion Den.

Moon, Kinkajou, Winter, Qibli, I'm coming! She thought.

Chapter 57

Jasmin decided to pass by the Scorpion Den, then fly over to the Great Five-Tail River. The river cut through SkyWing and SandWing territory, and many bloody battles had been fought to claim it as their own land.

"Oi," A rough, almost careless voice stopped her tracks as she was scanning the wide stretch of sand. The Scorpion Den was far behind her. What was a SandWing doing here?

"Who are you?" She asked cautiously.

"You're the assassin in the Scorpion Den, right?" The strange SandWing ignored her question. As Jasmin peered at him, she saw that deep scars were slashed viciously across his neck.

"That is none of your business," Jasmin growled. "Unless you are a customer, and I'm not taking any today."

"I heard that you were missing for a while, eh?" He grinned a sly smile. Jasmin saw that the SandWing was almost twice as big as her, but she didn't flinch. "Where were you?"

"None of your business," She repeated. "Look, whoever you are, I need to go. I'm busy."

"Where were you?" The SandWing asked again, this time grabbing her shoulder. Jasmin tried twisting away, but his grip was too strong.

"Let me go!" She snarled. Jasmin lifted her tail, the venomous tip glistening in the sun.

"You were in Jade Mountain Academy, weren't you?" He gripped her shoulder harder, making her wince as blood trickled down. Without hesitation, Jasmin let out a roar of fury and slashed her claws at his side, leaving a long gash on the SandWing.

He let out a roar of fury, and his dusty yellow scales glimmered in the sunlight. Jasmin leaped out of the way as he raked his own talon at her neck. He missed, and cut her arm.

"You fool!" The SandWing roared. "You don't know how important I am! I'm Barb! I had everything! You killed my brother!"

"Who's your brother?" Jasmin hissed, biting back a growl of pain as he trapped her tail, preventing her from using it.

"General Cactus? Does that ring a bell?" Barb sneered.

"Oh...I remember now," She muttered, clenching her teeth as the other SandWing stood on top of her. "That worthless excuse of a general was as scared as a scavenger when I ripped him apart, like what I'm about to do to you right now."

"Oh, how?" He crowed, his words dripping with sarcasm. Jasmin snarled, then let a stream of red and orange overcome her sandy yellow. Barb let out a yelp of surprise, and the hybrid let her normal turquoise and purple wash over her.

"Like this," She smirked, then slashed his stomach open, watching as his blood ran the sand red.

Chapter 58

Jasmin glanced as Barb gurgled something impossible to understand, then froze. A loud explosion from the distance sounded, and she saw a small village on the near the two dragons.

"I'll leave you to die here," Jasmin called to the limp form of her attacker. She flew as fast as she could over by river and landed at the shore.

"Oh, it's Possibility," She muttered to herself, then rushed through a crowd of dragons whispering to themselves. Jasmin didn't bother hiding her true identity, since almost half the dragons here were hybrids.

"Watch it!" She hissed as a SandWing bumped past her. The hybrid turned around to see who it was, then was surprised to see a familiar freckled snout.

"Qibli!" She yelped. "You're here! Where are the others? Did you see that explosion?"

"Hi, they're coming, and yes." The SandWing grinned. Just as he said that, Turtle and Moon emerged from the crowd.

"Jasmin! You're here!" Moon cried.

"Oh, you're here," Jasmin faced Turtle. "Where's Winter and Kinkajou?"

Moon's face fell, and Turtle drooped a bit.

"It's just...Winter went off with Hailstorm to the Ice Kingdom, and Kinkajou..." Qibli trailed off. "Kinkajou got injured. Very seriously."

"I left for a few weeks, and almost half the winglet's gone?" Jasmin snorted, though worrying gray shone on her scales.

"What happened to you?" Turtle suddenly interrupted. "Is your

cough better? And why are you covered in blood?"

"Oh, that." Jasmin glanced down at her still-bloody scales. "Well, I'm better now. And almost all of that isn't my blood. It's- oh. It's his blood."

Just then, Barb landed on the empty alley, blood still pouring out of his wound. He thumped a couple of steps forward to stand in front of Jasmin, Moon, Turtle, and Qibli.

"You thought I'd just die like that?" He snarled. "A dragonet like you can't kill me! I'm still alive!"

"I see that," Jasmin rolled her eyes. "But not for long."

She casually raised her tail, and thrust it through Barb's neck. He let out a choked cry, and coughed out thick red blood. The SandWing slumped to the ground, then lay limp. He wasn't breathing.

"See? Not my blood." Jasmin shook the red liquid off her tail-barb. "At least, most of it isn't."

Chapter 59

After a quick swim in the river to wash off the blood, Jasmin was ready to listen to what happened while she was stuck in the rainforest.

"So," She said slowly. "You didn't kill whoever that NightWing was. And Winter's gone. And Kinkajou's almost dead. And Peril's left."

"Um. Yes." Qibli blinked.

"Why didn't you stop her?" Jasmin groaned. Though Qibli, Turtle, and Moon were here friend, they could be SO STUPID sometimes. "Peril's great! And fun! And you *chased her off?*"

"No," Turtle interrupted unexpectedly. "She told me to stay here with Kin- everyone. She left on her own account."

"But from what I hear, you weren't exactly welcome." She raised an eyebrow at them accusingly. "And what about Winter? We need to wait for him, right?"

"Well, he seemed very determined to leave," Qibli sighed. "We've decided to go without him. It's been a week already, and he isn't here."

"But he might come back!" Moon argued. "He will come back. He has to."

To Jasmin, it sounded like the NightWing was trying to convince herself.

"His own fault for being a stubborn camel," She shrugged. "I feel like I should feel more sad."

Everyone agreed reluctantly after a while of arguing.

"So we just leave Kinkajou here?" Turtle asked.

"She's in safe talons," Qibli assured him. Jasmin flared her wings, ready to fly off to the Sky Kingdom. They had all agreed to try and find Scarlet in SkyWing territory, and hopefully find Peril or Winter on the way across the River.

"Wait. So we just leave this SandWing here?" Qibli asked.

"Um. Yes?" Jasmin shrugged. "Unless you want to drag a dead body along. Which I don't want."

"Okay..." Turtle looked dubiously at Barb's bloody corpse. Jasmin realized that, however many times she'd told them, it was their first time seeing her actually killing another dragon.

"Let's stop wasting time and just get Scarlet already." She flicked her tail crossly, then lifted off in the sky, with the sun blazing ahead.

Chapter 60

"Did you hear that?" Qibli asked suddenly. Jasmin pricked her ears, trying to hear what the SandWing was talking about. A faint scream sounded in the distance.

"I think it came from there," She pointed ahead. As they drew nearer, Jasmin saw two shapes; one was a dot of copper orange, the other was a black lump, lying on the warm golden sand. She squinted, flying ahead of the others, and saw that patches of silvery-blue scales showed up under the charcoal-black.

"Isn't that an IceWing?" Turtle panted, out of breath.

"Yes, I think," Jasmin frowned, trying to see who it was. "And that orange dragon must be Peril. She's the only dragon I know with copper scales and smoke wreathing all around her."

"Wait!" Moon suddenly cried. She zoomed ahead, and Qibli tried to overtake her.

"What's wrong?" He asked.

"That's Winter!" The NightWing was already rushing towards the two dragons, wings pumping steadily.

Sure enough, as Jasmin, Moon, Turtle, and Qibli landed on the ground besides the copper dragon, who was Peril, they caught sight of their friend, barely alive.

"I'm so sorry!" The SkyWing cried, her electric blue eyes clouded with despair. "He just suddenly started looping around in the air and we crashed, and he got burnt!"

"It's alright, Peril," Jasmin winced at the heavy smell of smoke, her thoughts flashing back to the explosion in the history cave.

"Here, this might help." Turtle took a smooth gray object out of a small leather pouch. It was a river rock. He gently grazed Winter's

burnt scales with the stone, and the SeaWing had a strange look on his face.

"How will that help-" Qibli stopped halfway through his sentence. Jasmin gaped at Winter in awe, as ice-blue mended over the burning black. The smoke stopped hissing from the IceWing's body, and everywhere Turtle's rock touched, the wounds seemed to mend instantly.

"Oh my moons," Jasmin blinked. "Turtle- what did you just do?"

Chapter 61

"Where did you get that rock?" Qibli asked. "No wait- how did you get that rock?"

"Oh," Moon breathed. "You're an animus!"

"Um, kind of a secret one?" Turtle shrugged. Jasmin rolled her eyes at his timidness. Winter stood up, blinking fiercely.

"I'm...not dead," He said at last.

"Well, why else would you be talking?" Jasmin snorted, tail flicking impatiently. "What I want to know is, why did you even get close to dying in the first place?"

"It wasn't my fault!" Winter flared. "That monster was attacking me! I was only defending myself!"

"No I wasn't!" Peril cried. "You were looping all over the place and you *collided* into me!"

"So." Jasmin glared at Winter. "Stick your royal IceWing snout out of Peril's business."

"You almost got killed!" Moon yelped, ignoring Jasmin's scathing comment.

"Wait- there was a NightWing with me when I came here. Where'd she go?" Winter asked, confused.

"Oh. I might have sent her away for help," Peril said sheepishly. "Sorry. Was she important?"

"Yes!" He cried. The IceWing stood up and started pacing on the warm sand. Jasmin sighed.

"Okay, so who was this NightWing?" She raised an eyebrow. "I thought all IceWings hated NightWings?"

Moon winced.

"And I thought you weren't coming back?" Qibli piped up.

"Why didn't you tell me?" Peril suddenly interrupted, looking at Turtle. "I thought you trusted me."

"Well-" Turtle started, looking startled.

"You said that Moon's secret was hers to tell," The SkyWing said fiercely. "Couldn't you have told me that you were an animus?"

"Peril," The SeaWing tried again. "I was going to tell you at one point, but-"

"But you couldn't trust me, right?" Peril whipped around and flared her burning wings. Jasmin leaped out of the way as her lashing tail almost hit her side. "Well, fine! I don't need you! I'll go find Scarlet all by myself!"

With that, Peril flew off into the distance, smoke trailing after her.

"Peril! Wait!" Turtle called, but she was already gone.

Chapter 62: Announcements

Ok. We've got stupid distance learning because some people in our school went to Shanghai Disneyland. But the good thing is that I'll probably be able to upload sooner. But we still have online learning.

Please check out my other story, Twilightmoon's Silence. I'm still working on it, but again, I've been able to upload sooner now.

Chapter 63

"Now look what you've done!" Jasmin looked crossly at Turtle and Winter.

"Um," Turtle glanced at the river rock in his talons. "Save Winter?"

"You know what I mean," She glared at him. "You sent her away! I can't believe you just did that!"

"Jasmin, calm down," Qibli's wide black eyes were startled.

"You have no right to say that!" She snapped. "All of you just sent the one dragon that could help us away! And she's just flying away because of you guys!"

"We're better off without that beast anyways," Winter snarled. "She's killed thousands of dragons! And we just let her stay with us?"

Jasmin stiffened as he continued.

"If a monster who's killed as many dragons as her wanted to stay, I'd rather kill myself!" The IceWing hissed.

"Oh no." Turtle looked at Jasmin, then back at Winter.

"Really?" Jasmin asked quietly, her voice dripping with menace.

"Jasmin, Winter didn't mean that," Moon soothed, but the hybrid ignored her.

"Well, I guess I'll leave, though I'd really love to see you kill yourself," She snarled, turning a violent shade of red. "Or perhaps I should kill you myself like all the 'thousands of dragons I've killed'. Perhaps with a face full of venom?"

With that, Jasmin rose to the air and dove after Peril.

"Who cares what Winter thinks?" She muttered to herself, ignoring

the desperate cries from her friends. Moon, Qibli, and Turtle. Not Winter. "Perhaps I should give him something to think about."

Jasmin turned around midair. Moon immediately lit up, but Winter continued glaring at her. His dark blue eyes were sorrowful and guilty, but he didn't take the snarl off his face.

Taking aim, Jasmin snapped open her jaws and shot a jet of black venom at Winter. He let out a yelp of surprise and fright and scrambled out of the way. The deadly liquid missed him by scale, and Jasmin whipped away into the clouds.

Chapter 64

"Bet he had quite a scare," Jasmin growled to herself. "Didn't actually expect me to shoot venom."

She'd actually aimed so that her venom would miss him, but get as close as possible. Jasmin's wings felt heavy as she flew further away from her friends. Perhaps they had stopped being her friend. Perhaps they didn't want to be friends with her because she'd shot her venom at Winter. Or because she was an assassin.

Perhaps they never were her friends at all.

Jasmin sighed as the thought crossed her mind. Perhaps they weren't her friends to begin with, because she was an assassin, and she'd went even lower on their friends list after endangering Winter's life.

That sounded like a possibility.

Jasmin stopped as she spotted Peril's familiar copper scales in the distance, close enough to see the smoke that always curled around her horns and wings. She was just about to call out to her, when she froze. Peril wasn't alone, but with two other dragons. SkyWings, by the looks of their huge wings and scales the color of flames.

One was a goldenish-orange that Jasmin had first thought was a SandWing before seeing his huge wingspan. There was a black leather case tied around his neck, and he was covered with gold jewelry.

The second SkyWing had orange scales and a small golden necklace around her long, elegant neck, studded with rubies and other precious gems. A dark smudge replaced where part of her face was supposed to be.

Ex-Queen Scarlet! Jasmin thought with a spark of surprise. *Peril can probably manage without my help, but why isn't she attacking?*

Peril was, indeed, on a large rock, her tail curled around her body so that it wouldn't burn anything near her. Jasmin drew nearer, slowly and carefully, so that none of the SKyWings could see her, then camouflaged into her surroundings.

"...what you've ever wanted." The other SkyWing coaxed. Jasmin watched in horror as Peril hesitated, then dipped her head so that he could slip the metal necklace over her horns.

Chapter 65

Jasmin looked at Scarlet's face. She couldn't see what the SkyWing was thinking about, since the ex-queen's face was half melted off. Jasmin thought guiltily back to Winter's terrified face when she'd let black acid shoot out her sharp fangs.

"Well?" The other SkyWing, the one who'd given Peril the necklace, prompted. Jasmin whipped her head around to watch Peril's reaction. She was surprised when she noticed that smoke had stopped wounding around her body. Peril cautiously set one talon down onto the soft grass, but the green stalks didn't instantly wither and burn away into ashes.

Instead, they just got crushed from the weight of a dragon's claws. Peril blinked, shocked, then leaped down from her large boulder. The grass lived!

Peril poked a flower. It didn't burn into smithereens.

"Did you see that?" She gasped, and Jasmin felt like screaming on the top of her lungs. "I'm normal! I can't burn anything!"

"Completely normal," Scarlet grunted. "You were much more use when you could burn anything."

"Well, what are you waiting for, Your Majesty?" Peril shouted, flinging herself into the air. "Let's go get your throne back!"

Jasmin stood in shock as the three dragons started lifting off. She then shook out of it, and flew with them, trying not to let bursts of surprised orange flash on her camouflaged scales.

Meanwhile, Peril was having the fun of her life, nudging and brushing against the other SkyWing, who was looking disgruntled.

"Could we do this a time that isn't flying in a wind current?" He

asked. "I mean, I love all this affection, thank you, but maybe another time?"

"One last one!" Peril laughed, bumping heartily into his side, almost knocking him out of the current, then started flipping through the air. Jasmin had never seen her looking so carefree. It was kind of...sad, she supposed, how the SkyWing had never been able to do whatever she wanted, always in the clutches of Scarlet and facing disgust and fright. Of course, she was free after Ruby took the throne, being able to fly away from Scarlet's grasp.

But it looked like that was going to change.

Chapter 66

Jasmin followed Peril, Scarlet, and the strange gold-covered SkyWing all the way through the Sky Kingdom. They flew as if they didn't care whether someone saw them or not. Just...flying like any other dragon.

Scarlet approached Queen Ruby's palace first, followed closely by the other SkyWing. Peril hesitated, then flew slowly towards them. Two guards were guarding the entrance, and they hissed at Scarlet. But when Peril reached out with her non-burning talons, they let out screams of fright and flew out of sight.

That was when Jasmin realized something was wrong. Peril wanted to change.

She wanted other dragons to know she wouldn't hurt them. She didn't want to be judged by her scales.

She didn't want to use them.

Oh no, Jasmin thought desperately. *Peril's under a spell!*

She wanted to warn Peril, tell her to take off the necklace. Maybe burn it once she took it off. But how had Jasmin not know? That explained why she was helping Scarlet. Jasmin should stop this.

But how? Her winglet hated her, Glory had enough to think about with Icicle to take care of, Queen Thorn didn't even know her name, and Coyote was dead. No one wanted her anymore. They didn't care about her. Jasmin certainly didn't care about them.

...Actually, she did, but that didn't matter. All she needed was a place to take a break. She'd been stuck in the rainforest by force. Not the greatest place to be at the moment.

The NightWing Kingdom? Jasmin didn't think for a second before saying no to that idea.

The Scorpion Den didn't seem very appealing at the moment.

Jasmin thought of the Ice Kingdom. No. It was too cold. But what about...somewhere between the Ice Kingdom and the Kingdom of Sand?

That was where Jasmin would go. The one place she actually felt happy. Carefree. With a friend.

When the three SkyWings entered the huge wooden doors, Jasmin cast one despairing look at Peril, then flew off as fast as she could to the place where Jerboa lived.

Chapter 67

After a few days of almost nonstop flying, Jasmin arrived at the small hook of land near IceWing territory. She squinted, seeing the familiar ocean in the distance. Jasmin beat her tired wings harder, hoping to arrive soon.

When she could finally make out Jerboa's small wooden hut, Jasmin almost collapsed out of the air in relief to find her destination. A couple times in her long journey, she'd wondered whether she was going the right path.

Jasmin landed clumsily on the sandy beach in front of the hut, and stumbled to the door. She knocked three times, and a rather startled Jerboa opened the door.

"Jasmin!" She gasped. "What are you doing here?"

"Jade Mountain was stressful," Jasmin replied, out of breath. "I almost killed my kind-of friend and the rest of them hate me and Peril's under a spell."

"Calm down!" Jerboa smiled warmly. "Come inside so that you can tell me what happened. I'll get some food and water."

Jasmin blinked at her friend gratefully. "Thanks for taking me in even though I'm a mess and kind of paranoid."

"No problem," Jerboa laughed. After a hearty meal crabs and fish stew, Jasmin told her how she'd been invited to Jade Mountain and met Moon, Kinkajou, Qibli, Turtle, and Winter.

"Moon's full name is Moonwatcher, but she likes being called Moon," Jasmin explained, then hesitated. "She can..."

"You don't have to tell me," Jerboa said.

"No, it's alright. Moon can read minds," Jasmin sighed. "And see the future. And she gave us this cryptic prophecy. Which, of course, we

need to figure out. But I guess I'm out now." She added. "Because I almost killed Winter."

"Why would you do that?" The SandWing asked. "Isn't he nice?"

"No. He's a jerk." Jasmin snapped, then paused. "Okay. Sorry. But he is a jerk. A very *self-esteemed* jerk. And he insulted me and Peril. So I shot my venom at him."

Jerboa raised her eyebrows at her. "Really. Just because he insulted you."

"Yes," Jasmin muttered. "But it was worth it."

"Really?" Jerboa asked again.

"...not." The hybrid sighed.

Chapter 68

After a day with Jerboa, Jasmin was already feeling better.

"Thanks for taking me in," She said again.

"No problem," Jerboa laughed. "Even though you were slightly mad and paranoid and a mess."

"I do not deserve that," Jasmin snorted back a laugh.

"You totally do not," Jerboa agreed. "But are you sure you want to go in a storm like this?"

It had been raining and the wind had been whipping through the beach like its life depended on it as soon as Jasmin had stood up to leave.

"I should be fine," She told the SandWing. "Big bad assassin, right?"

Jerboa, however, was serious. "I mean it."

"Okay," Jasmin grinned. "I totally super mean that I'm a big bad assassin."

Jerboa burst out laughing. "You know what I mean, Jasmin!"

"Sure," She waved, and called, "Bye!"

"Visit me soon!" Jerboa shouted. Jasmin flapped her wings and lifted into the dark gray sky. The ocean below thrashed furiously. Just as she turned to tell Jerboa that she would, a tree smashed into her side.

"Jasmin!" Jerboa cried.

"Argh!" Jasmin flailed around in the wind, her wings flinging helplessly as she tried to find balance. "Stupid tree!"

"Jasmin!" Her friend yelled again.

"I'll be fine!" Jasmin gasped from under large green leaves. "Go back inside!"

She felt the tip of her tail-barb grazing cold water, and flapped hard agains the howling wind. Jasmin tried wrestling the tree out of her face, but it pushed towards her like a magnet. She fell slightly, the wind tossing her around like a dragonet's toy. Her tail plunged deep into the salty ocean.

"No!" Jerboa sounded worried. "Watch out for the wa-"

Just as she said that, a huge wave engulfed Jasmin and washed her away from the sandy beach.

Epilogue

Moon sighed. She was currently in the rainforest, visiting Peacemaker and Hope. She wondered where Jasmin was. After she ran off, Jasmin hadn't been seen by anyone. Not even Peril, who had been with Scarlet.

"Any luck?" That was Euphoria, Jasmin's mother. She was awfully worried, her usual peach pink scales were now always shadowed with dark blues and grays.

"I'm sorry," Moon whispered. "I couldn't find her anywhere. Peril didn't see her near the SkyWing kingdom, Qibli can't find her in the Scorpion Den, and she wasn't in the NightWing kingdom as far as I could tell."

"Maybe Darkstalker did something to her," That was Hope, formerly Foeslayer, Darkstalker's mother. "Maybe she got in his way or something."

"Or not even on this continent," Moon suddenly interrupted. Euphoria's eyes went wide in fear.

"You think she die-"

"No!" The NightWing cried frantically. "I mean, what if she's somewhere else in this world? Like, maybe another continent."

"Moonwatcher, what are you hiding?" Hope frowned at her. "Euphoria, why don't you rest for a while? We'll find Jasmin."

After the worried RainWing left, she turned to Moon.

"Hope, do you know anything about the Lost Continent?" She asked immediately.

"Why, yes," Hope narrowed her eyes. "Did you have a vision?"

"Yes," Moon admitted. "I have a prophecy in my head, and

maybe...just maybe, Jasmin survived the journey and ended up there."

"Perhaps," Hope looked thoughtfully at her. "But, Moon, if she isn't-"

"She will," Moon said firmly. "Jasmin can survive the journey to the Lost Continent. She has to. And when she does, she'll save it."

Assassin in Pantala is Out!!!

Read the second part of Jasmin's story! As you probably guessed, she landed on a mysterious continent with dragons with four wings, and the strangest powers she's ever seen. But what happens when Jasmin meets a group of runaway dragonets?

https://www.wattpad.com/story/325992312-assassin-in-pantala